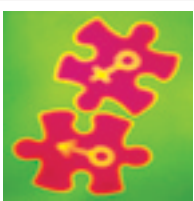


The survey found that most policy makers agree with the principle of gender equality and care about women's rights.

Page 7



The World is Jia Zhangke's fourth feature film, but only his first foray into mainstream film.

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Although these days it is a destination in itself, throughout its long history, Kashgar has always been a place to stop, on the way to somewhere else.

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CPC Central Committee Opens Plenary Session

The Fourth Plenary Session of the 16th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) opened in Beijing Thursday.

During the four-day plenum, the CPC Central Committee will hear a work report of the committee's political bureau while deliberating on issues concerning the improvement of the Party's ruling capacity.

It is the first time for a CPC Central Committee plenum to put the building of the Party's ruling capacity at the top of the agenda, analysts here said.

Analysts expect the Party's ruling capacity build-

ing will focus on issues such as how to pursue the policy of governing the country according to law, how to better handle the relations between the Party and the government, and how to improve its governance in line with the development of a market economy.

The plenum was convened according to a decision made at a July meeting of the CPC Central Committee Political Bureau. The meeting held that enhancing the Party's ruling capacity is a major issue of strategic importance to the fate of both the building of socialism and the Chinese nation. (Xinhua)

CBD Traffic Plan Unveiled

By Chu Meng

A primary traffic plan for Beijing's Central Business District (CBD) was unveiled to the public Wednesday at the Fifth Chaoyang International Business Festival held in the China World Trade Center.

The plan, which details the construction of three new subway lines that pass through the CBD, two dedicated loop bus routes, double-level underground road and walk ways and landscaped green belts, was jointly designed by MVA Hong Kong Transportation Consultation Corporation and the Beijing Academy of Urban Planning and Design. Since initial examination and approval by the Beijing Municipal Government in July 2002, the plan has been further revised by urban traffic planning experts from home and abroad, and integrates with the CBD commercial skyscrapers scheme.

"The most controversial project, the \$600 million China Central Television (CCTV) headquarters, has been given the green light and will start construction today. In light of the traffic congestion that is already a headache around the intersection of the Third Ring Road and Jianguomenwai (China World Trade Center), the traffic plan has always attracted considerable attention," Ni Yaoyuan from the information office of the administrative commission told *Beijing Today* Wednesday.

Emphasis on public transport

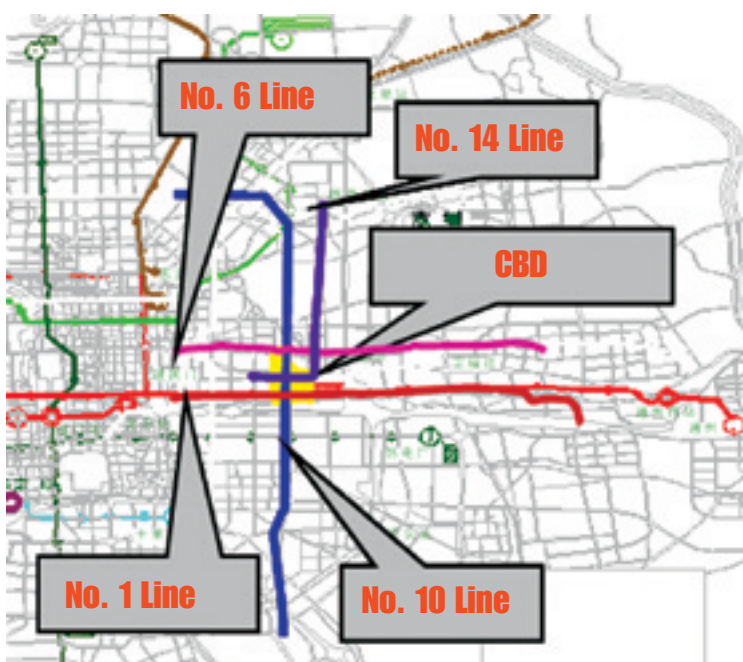
In most of the world's major cities, developing a comprehensive public transport system is the preferred way to tackle inner city traffic congestion, and public transport is a major emphasis of this plan.

Director-general of the CBD administrative commission's planning department Li Guohong, said in an interview with *Beijing Youth Daily* Sunday, "The plan abides by the principle of civil facilities first. In three years the subway lines will be completed, and the road system will be reconstructed to meet the needs of large-scale project construction."

Within the CBD area, special buses will follow two intersecting loop routes. On those roads, there will be dedicated lanes for bus use only. This preferential policy aims at encouraging people working within the CBD to use public transport rather than their own vehicles.

There will be four major transit points with extensive underground carpark where people driving or taking the subway into the CBD can change to other subway lines or to one of the loop bus lines. These transit points are at the northeast and northwest corners of the China World Trade Center intersection, on the west side of Jingguang Plaza and the north of the south-east Greenbelt.

According to the plan, 36,000 passengers daily will use the four subway lines passing through the



Subway and bus stations in the CBD

CBD. These are the already constructed No. 1 line, and the No. 6, 10 and 14 lines. At present, there are only three subway stations within the CBD; Guomao, Yongnanli and Dawanglu on the No. 1 line. However over the next three years, major interchange stations will be built at Guomao, Guanghua Lu and Huijialou on the No. 10 line, as well as the Kerry Center station on the No. 14 line, enhancing public transport capacity within both the CBD area and other parts of the city.

Underground connections

The key part of the traffic plan is the construction of double-level underground road and walkways. In view of the high land value within the CBD, the plan draws on experience in international CBD construction in New York's Manhattan and La Defense in Paris to make full use of underground space for not only roads and walkways, but also for parking, equipment storage and other business and service facilities.

Nucleus regions will be linked by underground walkways along each side the East Third Ring Road and other high volume traffic areas to relieve pressure on road traffic and feasibility studies are planned on the establishment of walkways using conveyor belt systems to more rapidly transport pedestrians.

Ni Yaoyuan commented, "to formulate such a comprehensive plan every functional department of local government and businesses and organizations within the affected area should be well coordinated. The most obviously example is the development of those above ground commercial real estate projects in the CBD, such as company headquarters, financial organizations and apartments. Such projects fall under the auspices of other governmental departments, however they still represent an integral part of the CBD traffic planning."

Ni also told *Beijing Today* that the draft plan for the road area has been modified so many times that some major CBD projects applying for permits have had to be reorganized. For example the SOHO project opposite the China World Trade Center, after adjustments, had its construction area reduced by about 30 percent.

According to Ni, since the initial relocation of certain residential communities within the CBD area has been completed, work has already begun on redeveloping some roads and intersections.

Modern management

Michel Gerin, general director of the Paris CBD's administrative commission, told

Beijing Today Wednesday, "as we have learned from nearly twenty years construction and administration of La Defense, roads and light railways are key aspects of such highly concentrated business centers. For people working at the headquarters or branch offices of multinational corporations in these areas, transportation efficiency has always been a primary concern."

Gerin, who is part of a delegation from La Defense attending the Fifth Chaoyang Business Festival, suggested, "To improve the traffic environment inside and outside Beijing's CBD, one end is to develop public traffic, such as increasing the total volume of express highways, subways and interchange stops. However, the second is equally important, that is to solve the problems of static traffic and parking. And the overall plan should try to provide a natural and quiet environment."

The CBD plan stipulates that there should be at least 65 parking spaces for every 10 million square meters of construction area. Moreover, modern management methods are to be adopted to enhance traffic convenience.

Environmental and landscape planning is also given full consideration. There will be a park in each of the four quarters of the CBD. The proposed parks are a Park of History and Humanism; a Performing Arts Square; a Science, Technology and Information Park; and a Natural Science Park. The four parks are linked throughout the CBD area by green belts and plazas.

At each major intersection, the green belt is expanded to make a wider, easier to negotiate space, creating a breathing space that will serve as a counterpoint to the busy streets and dense building complexes.

CBD background

Beijing's CBD was originally drawn up as part of the Beijing Municipality Urban Master Plan, approved by the State Council in 1993.

The total construction area covers some 10 million square meters, of which 50 percent is office buildings, 25 percent is apartments and the remaining 25 percent is taken up by commercial, service, cultural and entertainment facilities.

The total number of enterprises in the CBD is expected to reach 3,000, with 500 multinational corporations, 570 foreign representative offices, 150 foreign-funded banks and insurance companies. Currently, among 160 of the World Top 500 enterprises with their operations in Beijing, more than 120 have established offices in the CBD, including Motorola, Hewlett Packard, Ford, Samsung, BP Paribas Group and UBS AG.

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Safin Reaches Third Round, Ferrero Out

By James Liu

Marat Safin of Russia beat China's Lu Hao in straight sets (6-2, 6-2) to reach the third round of the China Open Thursday. Second-seeded Juan Carlos Ferrero was defeated by Kevin Kim of the US 4-6, 4-6 yesterday, following top seed Carlos Moya's defeat Wednesday.

Free Personal Classifieds

Beijing Today is launching a free personal classifieds service. For sale and wanted ads, situations wanted and vacant, language exchange and personals, and rentals will be

printed free of charge. Email your personal classifieds (in English and Chinese) to info@ynet.com. Personal classifieds should conform to relevant laws and regulations.

Government to Amend Laws on Direct Selling

By Wei Tingyu

Senior officials from the Ministry of Commerce and the State Administration for Industry and Commerce last Friday introduced draft amendments to regulations governing direct selling to 16 foreign-funded companies and six domestic companies at a seminar held in Xiamen.

The three drafts are amendments to the Direct Selling Regulation, the Direct Sellers' Regulation Act and the Pyramid Selling Schemes Regulation.

No written materials were provided to the participating companies and all details of the seminar were declared to be confidential. *The Beijing Times* reported that the official sent by the Ministry of Commerce warned that if any participants were found to have leaked information to the media, their company would be kicked out of the game immediately.

The term *zhixiao* (direct selling) was as strange as Amway and Avon in China in the 1990s, when the American-born sales mode first appeared here. Then in 1998, the name turned out to have extremely negative connotations when the government banned the sales mode, saying it was too similar to pyramid sales, which had led to widespread fraud, consumer losses and social disorder.

Since then, Amway and Avon have abandoned their original sales mode, opened sales outlets staffed by trained sales assistants and developed into profitable companies. Amway reportedly plan to increase their number of retail outlets from the current 120 to 180 by the end of the year.

According to Lu Zhengmin, an official of the Ministry of Commerce, under the draft amendments, the premium portion for all retailers is restricted to within 25 to 30 percent. The direct-selling price should comparable to the market price of similar products.

Consumers are given a trial period, during which time they should be fully refunded if they return the products to the company. As for the staff working in direct-sales, they should be qualified by passing a training course. Civil servants, soldiers, students and anyone under the age of 18 are prohibited from working in the industry.

According to Deng Zhan, deputy director-general of the foreign investment administration of the Ministry



Photos by Photocom

of Commerce, the government will set a high financial threshold for companies applying for such a license. The minimum registered capital is US \$100 million; the foreign-funded company should have over three years' overseas management experience and be a member of the International Direct Selling Association. The accumulated turnover in the prior three years should exceed 500 million yuan; the security deposit is 20 to 30 million yuan; the applying companies should have their own stores and workshops and only sell their own products.

"The new policy is specifically aimed at foreign companies," said Hu Yuanjiang, a researcher at the Chinese Institute of Policy and Management, pointing out that only a multinational company would have the economic strength to earn 500 million yuan in three successive years.

"Pyramid selling is a variation of direct selling," said Ren Xinzhou, a direct-selling researcher at the State Council Development Research Centre. "It is deceptive because participants who are on a certain level in the scheme must pay money for the chance to receive the promised bonuses when the pyramid grows to another level. However, the pyramid will eventually reach a point where it is impossible to add new participants, causing a crash of the entire sales chain. All involved lose their investment, except the crook – the pyramid scheme initiator and his cohorts."

There are three major varieties of direct selling. The first is the type practiced by the 10 foreign-funded companies and several domestic companies sanctioned by Chinese government in 1998. The second type is practiced by certain companies registered in Hong Kong. Their products are transported

from Hong Kong to the mainland and the premium is distributed in a secretive way. It is very difficult to trace such companies, some of which earn tens of millions every month. The third type is pyramid selling, utilized by companies with the support of underground organizations.

The current law limited the degree to which the State Administration of Industry and Commerce could control and superintend the industry, meanwhile "virtual management" via the Internet has made the situation worse. Therefore, the government is keen to clean up the market and make important changes.

The timing for the launch of the new regulations has not been publicized. However, Vice-premier Wu Yi stated in a speech at the China International Fair for Investment and Trade that it would be no later than the end of the year.

Public Security Review

Beijing's 110 emergency hotline received 10 percent fewer calls this week than in the preceding week. As police strengthened their crackdown on street robberies, a total of 222 criminal suspects have been apprehended after investigation.

Auto thefts mostly occurred at Hepingli in Dongcheng, Maizidian, Jiangtai and Yayuncun in Chaoyang and Enjizhuang, Sijiqing and Xiangshan in Haidian, mainly at night and in the early morning.

Xisanqi, Dongbeiwang and Yongding Lu in Haidian, Xinjiekou in Xicheng, Niuji in Xuanwu, Yangqiao and Qingta in Fengtai and Yangzha in Chaoyang were the most common place for robberies to take place, mainly during daylight hours.

Computer network crimes were the key target for police this week. Computer networks of financial institutions as well as home computers are targets for criminals. Police are urging computer network users to improve their firewalls and launch safety checks regularly.

(Information provided by Beijing Public Security Bureau)

Corrupt Officials Targeted

By Wei Lixin

Almost 23,000 government officials, including 109 provincial and ministerial level officials, were investigated from January to July this year, according to a report delivered at a conference Sunday on tracking down corrupt officials who have fled China.

Of these, 11,150 cases led to prosecutions being laid, resulting in almost 8,400 convictions.

Wang Zhenchuan, deputy chief prosecutor of the Supreme People's Procuratorate said that provincial level procuratorates are of vital importance as the middle level of the procuratorial system, and it is therefore vital that they improve and expand the scope and execution of their work.

New Tourism Regulation Approved

By Annie Wei

A regulation on tourism management, approved during the recent meeting of the Standing Committee of the Beijing Municipal People's Congress, will be implemented on December 1.

The regulation, aiming to better protect the rights and interests of tourists, sets tougher restrictions on travel agents and guides. According to the regulation, travel agents should sign a contract with customers defining detail tour schedules, service, price and legal issues. The regulation also sets penalties of up to 30,000 yuan for tour guides who demand tips.

If a travel agent wishes to transfer customers to another agent, they must first get the customers' written agreement. If the customer does not agree, the agent should return all fees paid by the customer and compensate for any losses.

Regarding complaints lodged by travelers, the relevant tourism administration office should decide whether to hear the complaint within 10 days, and a result should be announced within 45 days.

Outdoor Advertising Regulations Tightened

By Annie Wei

New regulations governing outdoor advertising in Beijing were released last Friday and will come into effect on October 1.

Drawn up by the Beijing Municipal Administration Committee, the regulations cover all aspects of outdoor advising, including stipulating areas where outdoor advertising is banned or restricted. When the regulations come into effect, buses that pass by Tian'anmen Square will not be allowed to carry any exterior advertising.

Other places where outdoor advertising is not permitted include along both sides of Chang'an Avenue from Jiangmen to Fuxingmen, the west and north sides of Zhongnanhai, Diaoyutai State Guesthouse, government institutes, schools and cultural relic areas.

The regulation also stipulates that outdoor advertising in or near residential areas should not cause noise or light pollution, or block light in a way that impacts on residents' quality of life.

Banking Watchdog to Charge for Supervision

By Sun Yongjian

The China Banking Regulatory Commission (CBRC) is to charge financial institutions a supervision fee, according to a report in *Beijing Youth Daily* Wednesday.

The first charge will be levied from September 20, for the first half of 2004, with an expected income of about 3 billion yuan are expected, the report said.

More than 5 billion yuan is expected to be collected for the whole year, according to a calculation in the report.

The charge will be in two parts, one for institution supervision, with a proportion of 8 yuan for every 10,000 of the registered capital, the other is for business supervision, calculated at 2 yuan per every 10,000 yuan in total assets.

Financial institutions to be charged include commercial banks, trust and investment companies, financial leasing companies and postal deposit institutions.

An unnamed CBRC official told *Beijing Youth Daily* that most of the routine expenses such as the staff's wages of the CBRC will rely on charges such as insurance and securities regulatory commissions, because the central financial appropriated funds represents a relatively small part of total revenue.

Auto Firms Top Foreign Taxpayers List

By Wei Lixin

Shanghai Volkswagen Automobile was China's top foreign taxpayer last year, turning in 4.51 billion yuan. The other motor giants – Shanghai GM and Changchun-based First Automotive Works Volkswagen came in second and third place, according to the State Administration of Taxation (SAT) report released Sunday.

Among the top 100 overseas taxpayers, 42 appeared on the list for the first time, including Guangzhou Procter and Gamble and Amway China. The total tax value paid by the 100 was 46.31 percent higher than last year, amounting to 62.76 billion yuan.

On the list of top 100 domestic taxpayers, traditional industries and infrastructure sectors remained the most important tax sources, according to SAT. Daqing Oilfield Co. was the top domestic taxpayer for the fourth year in succession, paying 18.60 billion yuan. Shanghai Tobacco rose to second on the list, paying 9.63 billion yuan. The total tax value paid by the top 100 was 30.47 percent higher than last years



242.15 billion yuan.

The tobacco industry remained the top domestic tax contributor, with 34 tobacco companies among the top 100, contributing 85.06 billion yuan.

The top 100 domestic taxpayers are distributed in 26 provinces and munic-

ipalities around China, with 14 based in Beijing.

Meanwhile just 11 business tycoons named on the 2003 Forbes list of the 100 wealthiest people in the mainland made it onto the list of were in the list of top 100 personal taxpayers.

SOE Legal Representatives to Face Audits

By Wei Lixin

Legal representatives of state-owned enterprises (SOEs) are to be audited for their economic liability when leaving their posts or at the end of their terms, under a new regulation that took effect at the end of last month. Meanwhile, an institutionalized term-audit or stated interval audit system will be set up for those legal representatives in the future.

According to the Temporary Regu-

lation on Economic Liability of SOEs, issued by the State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission of the State Council (SASAC), audits will be applied in the following situations: when a legal representative of an SOE is leaving his post or at the end of his term; when a legal representative of an SOE subsidiary company is leaving or at the end of his term; when a legal representative is promoted from a subsidiary company

to the enterprise headquarters.

The regulation also states that once a serious abnormal financial situation arises (such as debt crisis, long-term running loss, continued deterioration of asset quality), or the enterprises is undertaking an important business activity such as merger, separation or bankruptcy, an audit should also be taken of the legal representatives of the enterprises, to discover the cause, define the economic liability and correct illegal activities.

Chaoyang Biz Festival Gets Heads Talking

By James Liu/Sun Yongjian

The curtain dropped today on the Fifth Chaoyang International Business Festival, which opened Wednesday morning at the China World Trade Center. During the five-day event, seminars, forums, exhibitions, investment promotions and human resources exchanges were held and drew the participation of foreign investors from more than 50 countries and domestic representatives from more than 20 provinces.

Establishment of multinational corporation headquarters, as stressed at the Forum on CBD Headquarters and Regional Development, could be an economic engine for Chaoyang District, said Li Yang, director of the Institute Finance and Banking under the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

Chaoyang District Governor Chen Gang said at the Wednesday forum



A view of the CBD Financial Development Forum held yesterday. Photo by Photocom

that the development of Chaoyang and the Central Business District, or CBD, would depend on the headquarters economy. Some 120 of the top

160 companies on the Fortune Global 500 list have established headquarters in the CBD. Beijing Vice Mayor Zhang Mao

guaranteed that the CBD would be the focus of the city's drive to develop a modern service industry.

The Commercial Counselors Summit on Investment Promotion, held on the second day of the festival, was attended by counselors from more 50 embassies in Beijing and representatives from more than 20 countries and many domestic provinces.

The development of the CBD could not be separated from the financial support side, especially the development of the capital market, some speakers noted at the CBD Financial Development Forum held yesterday morning.

"The task at hand is to construct a more advanced and efficient capital market to keep up with the development of the CBD," Li Yang said.

"We should develop the markets for bonds, including mortgaged goods bonds and municipal construction bonds, and for derivative products."

Construction Bank Set to Launch Firm, Issue Bonds

By James Kirk

China Construction Bank, one of the big four state-owned commercial banks, announced Wednesday it was establishing a joint stock company in the run-up to its planned initial public offering, *China Daily* reported yesterday.

The new company should be established next week, it said.

The bank has been picked as a pilot for reform of the national banking system and split a \$45 billion bailout from the central government in late December with the Bank of China.

In June, Construction Bank received government permission to split into the China Construction Bank Group and the joint stock listing vehicle China Construction Bank Corporation after three months.

The joint stock company would handle the bank's commercial banking business including renminbi and foreign currency deposits, loans and banking cards, the report said.

Five founding shareholders, the largest being Central Huijin Investment Co, would invest to give the joint stock firm a registered capital of 194.23 billion yuan (\$23.4 billion), it said.

The remaining shareholders are Baosteel Iron and Steel Co Ltd, State Grid Corp, Yangtze Power and China Construction Bank Investment Co, which is wholly owned by Central Huijin Investment.

"By the end of June, the non-performing asset rate of China Construction Bank dropped 5.69 percentage points from the first quarter of this year to reach 3.08 percent," the newspaper said.

To replenish its capital base, China Construction Bank intended to issue a maximum of 40 billion yuan worth of subordinated bonds, it said.

The bank issued 15 billion yuan in subordinated bonds in a first round of sales in July, and has announced it will issue up to 10 billion yuan (\$1.2 billion) in a second sales round today.

The issue should cover 8 billion yuan (\$963 million) in 10-year bonds, but the bank had reserved the option to boost that to 10 billion yuan (\$1.2 billion) if there was sufficient investor demand, the paper said.

The bank's capital adequacy ratio was expected to surpass eight percent once all the bonds were issued, it said.

"Iron Lady"



Photo by Photocom

Resigns from Stock Market Watchdog

By Sun Yongjian

The State Council issued an announcement on Monday that Laura Cha, vice-chairman of the China Securities Regulatory Commission (CSRC), had given up her post, the Xinhua News Agency reported on Tuesday.

Cha earned the nickname of "Iron Lady" for her strict hand with listed companies and aggressive tactics in reforming China's stock market.

Gui Minjie, present assistant to the chairman of the CSRC, would take Cha's place, the *Beijing Star Daily* said on Tuesday.

The resignation was preceded by an extended period of poor performance in the domestic stock market, which reached a critical point on Monday when the Shanghai Stock Exchange hit 1,260 points, its lowest level since April.

Cha would not comment on the stock market plunge when interviewed by *China Youth Daily* on Monday.

Cha, 54, who became the first Hong Kong citizen hired as deputy ministry-level government official when she took the vice chairman post three years ago, would still receive a 5 million yuan annual salary specially approved by the State Council, reports said.

In Cha's first nine months in office, the CSRC enacted more than 40 laws and regulations for the punishment of listed companies that violated rules and more than 80 listed firms and 10 agencies were openly accused of wrongdoing and accepted administrative punishment.

Under her watch, the independent director system, guarantor system and other programs were established to render the domestic stock market more open, fair and transparent.

Cha denied rumors that she was stepping down for health reasons in the *China Youth Daily* interview.

"My body is fine, but my family is in Hong Kong. I have been separated from my family too long. That's the real reason," she said.

Hisense Accuses Siemens of Swiping Trademark

By Sun Yongjian

Siemens again stands accused of illegal use of a Chinese trademark, in this case that of major domestic appliance maker Hisense, Beijing Youth Daily reported last Saturday. Both Hisense and the German conglomerate confirmed the news this week.

Hisense Group registered the HiSense trademark with the Qingdao Administration of Industry and Commerce in April 1993 and then changed the mark to Hisense in 2000, group vice president Guo Qingcun said at a news release on Tuesday.

The Hisense mark was widely recognized among domestic consumers and was honored by the State Administration for Industry and Commerce as a famous trademark in 1999, Guo

said. The group had registered the trademark in more than 40 countries in Asia, Africa, Eastern Europe and Oceania, he added.

But the company later discovered the HiSense trademark had been registered in Germany by Bosch and Siemens Hausgerate GmbH (BSH) without expressed authorization, Guo said.

"Hisense group has been trying to negotiate with BSH to buy the copyright back for a reasonable price," he said.

Wang Junyan, a media specialist with Siemens China's corporate communications department gave *Beijing Today* a different take on events on Tuesday.

"BSH is an affiliate of Siemens in which both Siemens and Bosch hold equal 50 percent stakes," Wang said.

"BSH registered the trademark Hi-

Sense in Germany in 1999 as one of the Hi series of trademarks it has used for many years. There are many other brands in the Hi family such as HiNet and HiCom. If the trademark Hisense was used in the European market by any other company, it would be a violation of BSH's copyright."

Wang called the matter an "unfortunate coincidence," adding, "There is no direct competition between BSH and Hisense because BSH only sells high-end appliances in Europe."

BSH hoped to sell the copyright to the Chinese enterprise for a fair price, he said, which should be agreed on by both sides according to factors including trademark registration expenses in Europe and previous marketing and promotion costs.

Chinese TV Makers Accused of Dumping in US, Again

By Sun Yongjian

Just four months after being found guilty of threatening and harming the US television manufacturing industry, Chinese TV makers again stand charged of dumping in the US market by the same plaintiff, Five River Electronic Innovations LLC.

The US International Trade Commission issued its final judgment in the first case filed by Five Rivers, a TV maker from Tennessee, against Chinese makers on May 14.

"Konka has received accurate re-

ports... that Five River has filed a new round of legal action against Chinese TV makers," Chen Zhuo, director of the brand management center of Konka Group, a Chinese electronics manufacturer, told *Beijing Today* on Tuesday.

"This second suit has been filed because the plaintiff's demands were not satisfied by the May judgement," Chen said.

Five Rivers lodged its first anti-dumping suit, targeted at Konka, Changhong, TCL and other Chinese

TV exporters, on May 10 last year, *China Daily* reported.

The Department of Commerce on April 13 decided to impose anti-dumping duties of 4.35 to 78.45 percent on the named Chinese companies, essentially making the US market unprofitable for the targeted enterprises, a *Shanghai Securities* article said on May 15.

The Chinese companies have denied the charges and argued they sell their televisions fairly and at reasonable prices.

British Caterer to Cook for Chinese Trains

The world biggest caterer, Britain-based Compass Group, entered an agreement with a Chinese railway company recently to establish a rail food producing base in Beihai, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region.

Sydney S. Tang, a representative of Compass Group PLC, said Sunday that Compass was increasingly interested in the China market.

The 150 million yuan (\$18 million) venture between Compass and Beijing Association of Railway Sciences Environmental Protection Sciences & Technology Development Co. was expected to begin operations this year.

The railway sector is seen as the last but largest transportation market to be explored in China. China's railways transported more than 1.1 billion passengers in 2003, much higher than the number transported by bus or planes.

In April this year, Compass became the first foreign company to enter the catering side of China's rail sector when it began cooperating with the Shanghai Railway Bureau to offer catering services on trains running between Beijing and Shanghai.

(Xinhua)

Telecom Giant Stings

Service Providers

By Annie Wei

Domestic telecom superpower China Mobile released its second sanction notice in a month on September 5, naming 27 rule-breaking providers of mobile phone added value services, the *Beijing News* reported Tuesday.

Eight of the 27 companies were forced to exit Monternet, China Mobile's added value service network, because they did not pass qualification checks.

Among the services kicked out of the Monternet group were Sina.com's Interactive Voice Response mobile phone service lines, which reportedly switched from providing romantic advice to inappropriate erotic content, the newspaper said.

The Ministry of Information and Industry issued a notice on April 19 requiring stricter regulation of lucrative mobile phone short message services, which are extremely popular among this country's tens of millions of cell phone users.

New Corp's Murdoch Named to China Netcom Board

By Annie Wei

Rupert Murdoch, chairman and CEO of News Corp, and John Thornton, former co-president of Goldman Sachs Group, have reportedly been hired as non-executive directors of China Netcom Communications Group Corp (Hong Kong), the Hong Kong-based newspaper *The Standard* said last Saturday. The two foreign businessmen were among 13 new board appointments named in a company document issued before its initial public offering, the paper said.

Murdoch, 73, was appointed chairman of Netcom's compensation committee and Thornton, 50, a member of its audit and compensation committees. The company's new chairman was Zhang Chunjiang, former deputy minister of information industry, the paper said.

Shen Xiaomin, general manager for cooperate communications at Beijing based-CNC International, would not confirm the reports when contacted on Tuesday.

The Standard said the CNC Fund, formed by News Corp, Goldman Sachs and other investors, agreed in June to sell its stake in Netcom for 1.78 billion shares, or 8.1 percent, in the reshuffled company after it goes public.

Australian Brewer Retreats from Domestic Market

By James Kirk

Lion Nathan Ltd, Australasia's second-largest brewer on Wednesday announced plans to sell its China beer business to China Resources Snow Breweries (CRSB) for \$154 million, *China Daily* reported Thursday.

CRSB, a joint venture between China Resources Enterprises and world beer giant SABMiller, would pay US\$71 million in cash and assume US\$83 million in debts from Lion Nathan, the newspaper said.

Analysts said that Lion Nathan was quitting the Chinese market due to its huge losses in the competitive sector. Earlier reports said that during the past nine years, the company suffered total losses surpassing \$140 million.

CRSB now owns 36 breweries nationwide, *China Daily* said.

Toyota Brings Hybrid Car Production to China

Toyota Motor Corp., Japan's largest automaker, said Wednesday it had reached an agreement with China FAW Group Corp. to jointly produce Prius hybrid-engine cars in China by the end of 2005.

The move marks the first time for an overseas company to domestically produce hybrid vehicles, which run on electricity and gasoline.

Since the technology to make hybrid cars is highly sophisticated and difficult to transfer to China in the short term, Toyota would begin with domestic assembly of parts imported from Japan, while offering technical aid to FAW, company sources said.

Toyota, which is lagging behind its US and European rivals in the Chinese market, aims to expand its market share by promoting eco-friendly vehicles under China's new auto policy featuring reduction of fuel consumption, the company said.

(Xinhua)

Blair Unveils Green Offensive with Demand US Ratifies Kyoto

London, September 14, (The Independent) – Tony Blair will today urge the United States to commit itself to tougher action to combat global warming and promise that a list of green policies will be included in Labour’s general election manifesto.

The UK Prime Minister is to raise the profile of green issues as part of a drive to woo back people disaffected by the Iraq war. Labour’s private polling shows

that “progressive voters,” many of whom were alienated by Blair’s stance on Iraq, regard the environment as a top priority.

Speaking at a conference staged by the Prince of Wales’s Business and the Environment Program, Blair will stop short of a full-frontal attack on US President George W. Bush, but will make clear that when Britain takes over the presidency of the G8 Group of leading industrialized nations in January, it will expect America to accept its

responsibilities on global warming.

Blair, who believes the Kyoto treaty does not go far enough, will reiterate his call for the United States to sign it. He will identify climate change as one of the greatest challenges facing the planet, saying that one country acting alone cannot solve the problem. He believes that nations that promise to act must be assured that they will not be undermined by “free riders” who refuse to play their part.

(Andrew Grice)

Analyst’s Take:

According to the Tokyo treaty signed in 1997, 32 industrialized countries will reduce their greenhouse gas emissions by an average 5.2 percent below 1990 levels in the period from 2008 to 2012. The level for the US is 7 percent below 1990, and the EU, 8 percent. Because of Russia’s ambiguous attitude towards ratifying the treaty, it has not taken effect by far.

Blair attempted to build a green political image for the British general elections next year by means of showing his concerns on the global environmental problem.

But, for the Bush government, it is quite out of the question that it will change its attitude towards the problem, especially at the moment of presidential elections and as he faces harassment on anti-terrorism.

For a long time, the Bush government has held a strong attitude on the energy policy and global climate issues, saying that there is no way the US will ratify the pact and then hurt its economical development.

Though, by comparison, Kerry’s policy is much wilder, and maybe a modified energy policy will be made if Kerry is elected; but, considering the dim future of the Tokyo treaty taking effect, it is unlikely the US will ratify the

treaty in the near future.

The reasons why the US resists ratifying the Tokyo treaty are as follows: The first and foremost is that it will cost an unacceptable economic loss for the US to cut its greenhouse gas emissions to meet the treaty’s standard - a great number of jobs will be lost, too.

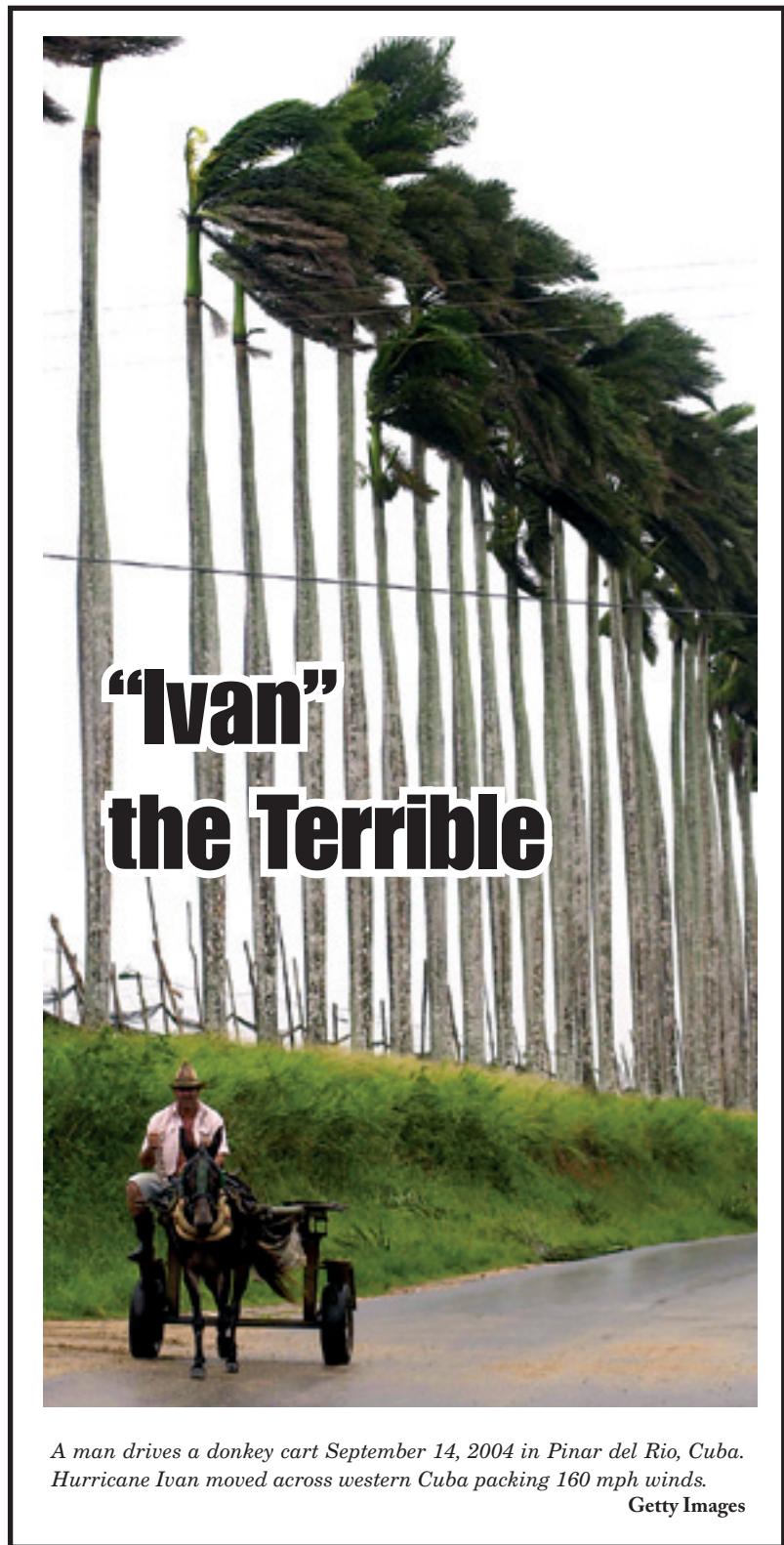
By comparison, the mission for the EU to cut emissions seems much easier to achieve. For one thing, the task is jointly carried out by all EU members as a bubble; for another, the UK and Germany make up a majority part of the task: The former has transferred its main consumed energy from coal to natural gas successfully and the latter has shut down a large number of coal enterprises located in East Germany after unity - so, the emission of carbon dioxide is cut down to a great extent.

The second reason is that the US considers it to be unfair that only industrialized nations are required to cut emissions under the treaty. Those developing countries like India and China do not need to cut emissions under the treaty.

And, finally, the Bush government believes there is a scientific uncertainty surrounding the global-warming issue.

In a word, the US takes economic development as a top priority as long as its economy develops, investments will increase and the clean and green energy technique will be prompted, thus, the efficiency of energy consumption will be improved. The US’s attitude towards energy and the global climate issue has long been stable and experienced little change by now.

— Chen Ying, Associate Research Fellow, Institute of World Economics and Politics (IWEP), Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS)
(Wei Lixin)



A man drives a donkey cart September 14, 2004 in Pinar del Rio, Cuba. Hurricane Ivan moved across western Cuba packing 160 mph winds.
Getty Images

OPEC to Add More Oil to Mix

Vienna, Austria, September, (AP) – The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) will increase the cartel’s oil production by one million barrels a day to meet the global demand for oil.

Kuwaiti Oil Minister Sheik Ahmad Fahad al-Ahmad al-Sabah said the cartel agreed to raise output by nearly 4 percent, adding it would take effect November 1.

The decision will increase OPEC’s self-imposed output limit for all its members, except Iraq, from 26 million barrels a day to 28 million barrels, bringing the cartel in line with actual output, which stands at more than 27.4 million barrels now.

Saudi Oil Minister Ali al-Naimi reiterated Wednesday that current prices were too high, but said there was no sign that the market’s strength was damaging demand.

A proposal by the cartel’s board of governors to increase the price band will be made at a meeting December 6 in Cairo.

The million-barrel quota hike is designed to underline OPEC’s intent to bring crude prices back below \$40 a barrel.

Local Report:

Actually, OPEC has considerably boosted production over the past three months as oil prices have been rising, too.

For more than 40 years, OPEC has been trying to protect the interests of oil-producing countries against Western oil companies since it was founded in 1960 in Baghdad.

OPEC is keen to show that it can play its role as the oil market’s informal regulator. To bring more oil or less oil to the market has been a common and visible tackle to adjusting oil prices.

But, this time, most of OPEC’s members are already producing well above their quotas and near their maximum capacity; for example, seven OPEC countries - Algeria, Iran, Kuwait, Libya, Nigeria, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates - are producing at capacity or close to it. Only Saudi Arabia can still increase production by about one million barrels a day.

This decision was also overshadowed by a weekly report that showed a big drop in crude stocks in the US, as well as market anxieties over Iraq oil security, interrupted supply from non-OPEC countries such as Russia, and damage caused by Hurricane Ivan, which swept through the Gulf of Mexico and forced the shutdown of some production in the US. This means OPEC’s decision could not defeat the price hike and other market factors.

— Yangtze Evening Post, September 16
(Jing Yi)

Assault Weapons Ban to Expire Monday

San Francisco, California, September 13, (AP) – Ten years after being born out of the carnage of three California mass shootings, the federal assault weapons ban is fading out of existence.

While manufacturers look for a boom in business as people buy previously banned weapons like TEC-9s, police chiefs warn of an upsurge in crime.

The law’s chief sponsor, Democratic Sen. Dianne Feinstein, is urging retailers not to sell the disputed weapons, while hoping for a change in the nation’s political climate.

Just over a year after the San Francisco shootings, former president Bill Clinton signed Feinstein’s bill, making it law. It banned the sale of 19 specific semiautomatic weapons and ammunition clips of 10 rounds or more.

But it was set to expire exactly 10 years later if it was not renewed in Congress, and President George W. Bush never pushed Congressional leaders to move the renewal legislation.

“The bill’s not perfect; we could have written a better bill,” Feinstein says. “I just didn’t know how craven the gun manufacturers would be.”

Studies done by pro- and anti-gun groups, as well as the Justice Department show conflicting results on whether the ban has helped reduce crime.

California and other more urban states, including Massachusetts and New York, have passed their own laws curbing the use of assault weapons where some are more stringent than the federal ban.

Analyst’s Take:

On September 14, just three days after the anniversary of the grisly attack on the twin towers in New York three years ago, despite wide-

spread popular backing, a 10-year ban on assault weapons has expired in the United States.

The ban, enacted in 1994 during the Bill Clinton administration, had outlawed 19 types of military-style assault weapons, banned certain features on firearms such as bayonet mounts, and limited ammunition magazines to 10 rounds. The end of the ban means firearms can now be legally bought.

Here, some interest groups and gun manufacturers such as the National Rifle Association (NRA), which has hailed the expiration of the ban, have exerted their influence. The NRA, founded in 1871, was an influential interest group. In the small states in particular, and the rural states, the NRA’s control is much greater. This association aims to abolish gun bans, always hampering presidential or congressional candidates who advocate bans on weapons. Democrats have paid highly when Clinton signed the ban in 1994 and lost control of the House to the Republicans.

Some believe that former vice president Al Gore lost crucial states, including his home state of Tennessee, during the 2000 election because he came out too strongly for gun control. To be sure, in the 2004 election, both Republicans and Democrats do not want to displease influential groups like the NRA. Thereby, Bush has promised to renew the ban but did not take any actions on it; Kerry’s Democrats, though, hit hard at Bush, supporting the ban vocally, too. This, of course, resulted in an end to the ban, where group interests have defeated public interests once again.

— Wei Hongxia, research fellow at the Institute of American Studies, China Academy of Social Sciences
(Jing Yi)

Coke Expects at Least 24% 3Q Loss

Atlanta, September 15, (AP) – Coca-Cola warned that its third-quarter per-share results will drop at least 24 percent from a year ago because of poor weather in Europe and problems executing its business strategy in North America. The company’s stock fell sharply in the news.

The world’s largest beverage maker temporarily shelved its policy of not giving quarterly earnings guidance in announcing on Wednesday the unfavourable outlook, which would fall short of expectations.

Atlanta-based Coke said its reported net earnings for the July-September period will be in the range of 35-38 cents. At 38 cents, that would be a 24-percent earnings-per-share decline from the 50 cents Coke reported in the same period in 2003.

Excluding charges, Coca-Cola said it now forecasts third-quarter earnings in the range of 46-48 cents per share. Analysts surveyed by Thomson First Call were looking for Coca-Cola to post third-quarter earnings of 54 cents per share, excluding one-time items.

Sony To Pay Only \$300M in \$5B MGM Deal

Tokyo, September 15 (AFP) – Sony, which is leading a group of investors to acquire the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Hollywood movie studios for nearly \$5 billion, will only pay some \$300 million initially in the deal, according to reports.

Sony would only pay about \$300 million because the firm cannot afford a huge investment due to a sluggish household electronics business and the large investment required for semiconductor operations, the Nihon Keizai Shimbun said, without citing sources.

Sony is expected to gradually increase its stake in the US studio by buying out its co-investors, said the Yomiuri Shimbun newspaper, which also reported the Japanese firm would initially spend only \$300 million.

Tokyo-based Sony spokesman Keita Sanekata declined to comment on the reports. “We cannot confirm how much our firm will pay for the acquisition of MGM,” he said.

Sony confirmed Tuesday that the consortium led by Sony of America agreed to acquire MGM for \$12 in cash per MGM share, plus the assumption of MGM’s debt, in a deal worth nearly \$5 billion.

US Airways Says Nasdaq Will Delist Shares

Los Angeles, September 14, (Reuters) – Bankrupt airline US Airways Group said on Tuesday the Nasdaq stock market will delist its shares and its stock symbol UAIRQ at the start of business on September 15.

The Virginia-based airline sought bankruptcy protection last Sunday after being pinched by low-cost rivals, higher fuel prices and a failure to win new labour concessions.

Wal-Mart Boss Pips Murdoch in Powerbroker List

London, September 14, (Mail & Guardian) – The readers of glossy society magazine Vanity Fair are likely to raise an eyebrow or two this month after the magazine put the boss of Wal-Mart at the top of its annual New Establishment power list.

Lee Scott, who has helped build Wal-Mart into the world’s biggest retailer with a pile-it-high and sell-it-cheap philosophy, is a surprise entry. The list promises to rank the top 50 leaders of the information age and is normally dominated by media, entertainment and technology figures.

Scott, who was number nine on last year’s list, displaces News Corporation Chairperson and Chief-executive Rupert Murdoch. Third is another media magnate, Viacom’s Summer Redstone, followed by Bill Gates of Microsoft and Steve Jobs of Apple.

Scott (55) makes the top of the list because Wal-Mart has become “the nation’s dominant peddler of cultural products,” the magazine said. Wal-Mart is the largest company in the world in terms of revenue and has a greater market capitalization than Time Warner, Disney, News Corp and Viacom combined.

Royals at Ease for Harry’s 20th

London, September 15 (Reuters) – Britain’s royal family has released a picture to coincide with Prince Harry’s 20th birthday.

Taken by photographer Mario Testino, the picture shows Harry in fits of laughter leaning forward with his face down, while his father Prince Charles and 22-year-old brother Prince William are facing the camera and smiling broadly in the black and white photograph, taken at Highgrove, his countryside home in Gloucestershire.

“They were not laughing at anything in particular,” said Testino. “It’s just the way they relate to each other. They seem to have a uniquely close father-son relationship.”

The Sun tabloid was not impressed. It said the photo looked like “a dodgy holiday snap” and attached a “quality control” sticker, saying “to improve your pictures make sure subjects look at camera.”

Harry, second of Charles’s two sons from his marriage to Princess Diana, who died in a car crash in Paris in 1997, turns 20 Wednesday.



Harry (left) with father Prince Charles (center) and 22-year-old brother Prince William
Reuters Photo

Public Supports Bigger Buffer for Forbidden City

By Wang Xiaoxiao

More than 80 percent of the people consulted in the two weeks since the Beijing Municipal Cultural Relics Bureau began soliciting opinions on the planned buffer zone around the Forbidden City prefer the larger of two proposed schemes, the *Beijing News* said Wednesday.

Beijing Today reported on this issue on the front page last Friday.

On Tuesday, 10 days after the bureau began testing the public waters,

bureau Director General Mei Ninghua held a press conference to tell downtown residents that some degree of construction would still be allowed within the protected area.

An online survey showed many people living inside the proposed Zone borders were concerned that a construction moratorium would prevent the improvement of residences in order to keep their original appearances, the *Beijing Times* said.

The larger of the proposed zones

would cover 30 historical and cultural areas in Beijing, including the Shishahai and Luoguxiang regions.

Mei said a height ceiling of nine meters would be imposed on buildings within the buffer zone and that houses in poor condition would be reconstructed, not just demolished.

"Modern buildings within the borders that are out of place against the historical setting of the Forbidden City should, on principle, be rebuilt

to more closely match the World Heritage Site in terms of height, appearance and color," he said. "Yet no new structures will be knocked down for the time being."

Originally, a third proposal called for an even larger protection zone that would include Wangfujing Avenue, but the plan was scrapped after closer inspection revealed it would be all but impossible to restore every structure within the massive area, Mei said.

College Grounds Wannabe Dropouts

By Dong Nan

A group of female freshmen hoping to drop out from the Beijing College of Economy and Technology have called for public assistance since they were prevented from walking through campus gates by college authorities.

"We are all from other provinces and came to Beijing for our college educations. We've found that the Beijing College of Economy and Technology is not as good as its advertisements claim, so we wanted to leave. But the college has refused to let us go, and even threatened us and restricted our personal activities and movement," the 20 students wrote in a co-signed letter posted in many online forums last week.

The private college's ads said it was located in Zhongguancun, Haidian District and had a large faculty of skilled instructors, but the students were taken to a branch campus in suburban Changping County where facilities were poor, lacking even bathrooms, and most teachers were only college graduates, the letter said. The college even charged 2,600 yuan for accommodation, far more than the advertised room and board fees of 1,600 yuan, without any explanation, the students wrote.

A freshman student surnamed Zhao from the college's International Trade Department told *Beijing Youth Daily* on Sunday that the college recruited only 100 new students this year, and because of the low enrollment, decided to temporarily combine four departments, affecting 40 first-year students. However, that new department had yet to run one formal class since the term began two weeks ago, leaving students to learn on their own, Zhao said.

For those reasons, the 20 students decided to call it quits, but the head of the college's recruiting office, surnamed Zhou, told them they could not drop out unless their parents approved and personally came to pick them up.

The students responded that they came from distant rural areas, and most of their parents were illiterate and financially incapable of making the trip. The college used that as a reason to drop the matter, the letter said.

Zhao said after they tried to drop out, she and the students were moved to another dormitory in an area where many teachers lived and not allowed to leave campus. She said whenever she left the dorm, she was trailed by a male student from another grade. He later confessed that he was sent by the college to "keep her from doing stupid things," Zhao said.

Other prospective dropouts reported similar experiences.

Zhou told *Beijing Youth Daily* that he had not heard of any such incidents, but did acknowledge that some students had wanted to drop out. "But not many," he quickly added.

Wei Zhuxian, a student from Guilin, Guangxi, was the only student to succeed in leaving the college as of Wednesday.

Wei told *Beijing Today* that she was allowed to go only because she had argued repeatedly with Zhou and had been hit on the arms by some teachers. The college agreed on Monday that she could drop out on grounds she not talk to the local media, she said.



Six twins showed up at the news conference.

Photo by Photocom

Double Vision

By Zhou Ying

More than three hundred twins from all over the world will gather at a celebration of genetic duplication at Honglingjin Park in Chaoyang District from October 2 to 6.

It will be Beijing's first running of the International Twin Culture Festival. The schedule of activities will include games and fun athletic competitions for pairs, as well as some "top ten twins" winners, with prizes going to the most beautiful, gifted and famous pairs.

The event is open for free to all twins that sign up to participate before Monday, September 20. More details on the event are available at www.hljpark.com.

Chinese Identity May Have Provoked Beating of HK Citizen

By Dong Nan

A businesswoman from Hong Kong says she was beaten last Saturday in Chaoyang District simply because she called herself Chinese.

From her bed in the China-Japan Friendship Hospital, Wang Xiaoju, 62, said that the attack occurred inside the Yabao Building on Yaobaolu, the *Beijing Times* reported on Tuesday.

The incident began when she entered store No. 300 in that building and was surprised when a sales girl asked if she was Chinese.

"I said, 'of course I'm Chinese,'" she recalled. The sales person then told her that Chinese were "not welcomed in the store."

Wang said she quarreled with the young woman until an older man appeared and assaulted her.

"He hit my left eye and I lost consciousness for around 10 minutes," Wang told the *Beijing Times*. When she awoke, she promptly called the police.

However, the accused attacker, Mr. Qi, who works as a translator at the store, denied the beating ever occurred.



Wang Xiaoju is still in the hospital.

"We quarreled and then I tried to get her out of the store. I never hit her, but when I touched her sleeve, she fell on the ground. I thought she was pretending to faint, so I did not help her up," he was quoted as saying in the newspaper's report.

Doctors at the China-Japan Friendship Hospital said Wang's face, head and neck showed signs of trauma, her blood pressure was far above normal and the vision in her left eye had been seriously damaged.

Wang later said she had been planning to make a \$10 million business investment in Beijing, but had decided to take her money

to Tianjin following the incident.

Wang Yu, the salesgirl who quarreled with Wang Xiaoju, said she only told the older woman that the shop did not sell goods to Chinese and did not try to drive her out.

The head of the safety department at Yabao Building, surnamed Wang, told the *Beijing Times* that no stores in the building refused Chinese customers, but because they tended to exclusively stock European-style clothing, they may not have many garments suitable for domestic shoppers.

The owner of store No. 300, a man surnamed Gao who did not give his full name, refused to comment on the incident beyond saying he was sure the police would find the truth.

Most of the shops in Yabao Building are wholesalers of clothing that target foreign buyers. Last October, many local media reported shops in the building were refusing Chinese customers, a policy widely criticized as discriminatory.

Chaoyang police are still looking into the case. Wang has said she plans to file a lawsuit against Qi.

Ten Injured in Local Gun Fight

By Annie Wei

A brief gun battle that left 10 people injured, four seriously, broke out in southern Daxing District last Saturday, the *Beijing News* reported Tuesday. Daxing police have detailed 12 men suspected of involvement in the skirmish.

A police source disclosed the assailants used homemade guns in the incident, which took place at the Beiputuo Film and Television City in the Huangzhuang area of Daxing, the article said.

The 10 injured were sent to Renhe Hospital in Daxing, and the four most seriously wounded remain in the hospital under round-the-clock police surveillance, it said.

A doctor from the hospital was quoted as saying he believed the four injured men, all of whom had sustained wounds from small steel balls and shrapnel shot from the primitive guns, were from Liaoning Province, judging by their accents.

Another source said the two par-

ties involved in the clash were from two companies that had tangled violently in the past. Last Saturday afternoon, a group of around a dozen men from one side tried to pick a fight with the other, but were met with a hail of crude bullets when they arrived at the office building's gate, the source said.

A Daxing police spokesperson told *Beijing Today* on Thursday that they were investigating the case and could not provide any detailed information.

Dislocation Case Audited by Government Panel

By Wang Fang

On Monday, 92 provincial and ministerial officials from the National School of Administration observed the handling of a case in the Beijing No. 1 Intermediate People's Court.

The plaintiff, 84-year-old Li Shuying, was suing her district government for making a change that allowed her daughter to keep all the money received as compensation after the family's apartment was demolished last year.

Li had lived in the two-room apartment near Zhenwumiao in Xicheng District for years. In December 1987, the former Xicheng Housing and Land Management Bureau changed the name of the leaseholder from Li's husband to her second daughter without notifying Li.

When the apartment building was torn down in 2003, the 360,000 yuan in compensation granted by the local government went to the daughter, who kept all the money. Li filed her suit against Xicheng authorities on grounds she did not know about the name change until just before the demolition.

The court ruled that the switch was illegal, especially since Li qualified as the legal leaseholder because she did not have any personal source of income or other housing.

The provincial and ministerial officials who audited the case were participants in the Justice in Administrative Trial Workshop held by the National School of Administration.

Professor Ying Songnian, who organized the observation panel, told the *Beijing Times* on Thursday that government officials needed to experience the procedures of administrative trials in order to really understand the judicial process.

Beijing Vice Mayor Niu Youcheng, a member of the workshop, noted that continuing demolition to make way for new buildings for the 2008 Olympic Games meant disputes about relocation and compensation were sure to persist.



Discounts and 24-hour operations drew over one million people to the Beijing New World Shopping Center last weekend.

Photo by Photocom

Mall Promotion Sparks Shopping Fever

By Zhou Ying

Local consumers went on an unprecedented round-the-clock shopping binge last weekend at the Beijing New World Shopping Mall.

The mall in Chongwen District set a local record by staying open 60 straight hours beginning midnight last Friday to celebrate its sixth birthday.

"We received a total of over one million customers," Liu Jinglun, deputy section head of the mall's public relations department told *Beijing Today* on Monday.

Liu said that the results far exceeded expectations. "Preliminary figures show gross sales hit around 100 million yuan during the 60-hour period."

The shopping mall was jam-packed throughout the weekend, with lines of ready-to-pay customers snaking up to six or seven meters from cash registers.

"I had to wait in line for two hours for my turn to pay. I never expected so many people would show up at night!" a Ms. Zhang was quoted as saying by the *Beijing News* last Friday.

Things edged closer to chaos in the mall's supermarket. The line of people waiting to get their hands on reduced-price rice ran over 200 meters long and all the major goods offered at discounts, such as rice, flour, cooking oil and beverages, sold out in just 20 minutes.

Liu speculated that many shoppers may have been drawn by the reduced prices of high-end items such as cell phones, jewelry and wristwatches, rarely discounted at local malls.

The flood of consumers ground traffic outside the mall to near standstill. As late as 4 am, cars were bumper-to-bumper and parking places were all but impossible to find, even along nearby alleys, according to one local resident.

Business analyst Li Kerang told the *Beijing Morning Post* that other shopping malls in Beijing could use New World's success as a future reference, but advised they refrain from simply copying the promotion activity.

"You have to take everything into consideration, such as sufficient supply of goods, public security and personnel management," Li said.



Price Hike Alert

By Sun Yongjian \ Zhou Ying

With the surging consumption of daily necessities, the ensuing price hike – forecasted to reach its peak in this year's third quarter – has recently come under public scrutiny.

"There is a rise in charges for water and electricity and also a rise in oil and rice prices, which has added to our difficulties," a local resident of Beijing's Haidian district told the *China Economic Times* last Tuesday.

Besides common people who are uneasy about the price hike, enterprisers also feel the sting.

"The price of pork has risen from 5.8 – 7.8 yuan every half a kilogram," complained Chi Xiangdong, a deputy manager of the Dao Xiangcun Food Company, to the *China Economic Times*, adding, "We had to raise the price of our cooked meals as well."

Chi is worried that if costs continue to mount, people like him will make less profits.

"They price of raw materials has risen by 20 – 30 percent," he continued, "however, we cannot make a big rise in the terminal product price. The price of snacks has risen by 7 percent and cooked food had risen by 12 percent till now."

Chi warned that the increase may become an obstacle in the development of the enterprises' long-term management.

"The less the profit will be, the less enterprisers will put into production and they will not have enough money to enhance the environment of operation, so they cannot guarantee the security and quality of the food," Chi charged.

According to data from the National Bureau of Statistics of China released on Monday, the CPI (consumer price index) has increased by 5.3 percent compared to the same period last year. And although some experts believe that the figure is reasonable and that the result will not be too grave, the general public and enterprisers argue that the increase is more serious than they think.

Below is a round-up of some points of view.

Yi Xianrong, director of the Institute of Financial Studies of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences

I wonder whether the CPI can perfectly reflect the real changes in price because the factors that affect the CPI do not include the people's largest consumption – buying a house. I think the number cannot totally reflect people's consumption standards.

Nowadays, people always

Looking For Triggers

misunderstand the rise in prices. I think the price trigger is due to the relationship between supply and demand. People used to insist that it was the rise in costs that caused the rise in prices, and then led to inflation.

However, I think it is that demand exceeds supply and brings about the rise in prices and inflation. For example, the urgent demand for housing induces a rise in the means of production, such as steel products and building materials. Therefore, if ultimate consumer goods are still sold at a high price, how can the price of raw materials be dropped?

I think the upward trend of the CPI will continue due to the macro-economic bubble that has already come into being, as well as the overheated investment and repeated construction in infrastructures such as real estate.

As the only measure to curb the overheated trend of the macro economy, it is unavoidable to raise the interest rate because the nine months of a negative actual interest rate (the nominal interest rate minus the 20 percent in interest rate taxes) will stimulate an overheated investment in infrastructure.

Other measures, such as open-market operations and raising the deposit reserve ratio will not be effective.

Influenced by the rising prices of fuel, water, electricity, rice, energy, metal, etc., presently the prices of consumer goods keep going up. Inflation will reach more than two digits if rising housing prices are calculated.

Citizens' money is massively but unreasonably flowing into the real-estate market due to the overly low interest rates; thereby, housing prices are raised and the bubbles in real estate are generating rapidly.

The interest rate should be in line with the macro-economic development trend, but the present interest rate can't reflect the real condition of economic growth. It can't guarantee that the cap-

ital can flow towards the effective places.

Zheng Chaoyu, a professor from the department of economics from Renmin University of China

Looking at the figures, we can see that there is a rapid rise in the price of energy sources and farm production.

The main reason for the hike in these two types of production is that supply falls short of demand. Speaking of agricultural products, I think the hike was because of the four-year reduction in output.

However, the period of reduction in output has passed, and there will be a bumper crop this year. So, I think the rise in prices has now been affected by the time lagging. After the foison, prices will naturally drop.

What I'm concerned about now is that farmers can't make a profit from the price rise and dealers will receive all of the price difference. They may still buy grain from farmers at a low price because farmers are always ill-informed.

Zhao Xijun, professor of the School of Finance, Renmin University

A falling CPI is expected in the coming two months, according to statistics released by the National Bureau of Statistics of China, although it has been soaring during the past three months.

The present soaring CPI is an indicator of consumption price, which has kept going up since the end of last year due to the high prices of raw materials, such as steel; but now, the end of the upward going trend is approaching.

Hence, no sufficient reasons have been found for raising the interest rate to curb the overheating economy because the peak of the mounting CPI has been attained.

Another reason for the high CPI this year is the sharp contrast with last year in general economic development. The general economic condition of last year was abnormal due to the influence

of SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) and a series of economic indicators, such as consumption, investment, and so on, were far beyond the normal level. But this year these indicators have been recovered.

Meanwhile, the increase in bank deposits in the first seven months this year was 100 billion yuan less than in the same period last year.

Everything shows that a powerful trend of consumption is being exhibited at the present time. Generally speaking, both general supply and general demand are strong.

However, a structural imbalance between general supply and demand has been found. For example, in some markets, such as economic estates, power, energy, communications, transportation, etc., supply is weaker than demand; while in other markets, such as luxury estates, it is completely different.

Potential risks are possible because the upward trend in consumption prices, investment, credit and GDP (gross domestic product) could lead to inflation.

Besides, with the adjustment of the interest rate, multiple financial instruments could be available to curb this trend, such as open-market operations, deposit reserve ratios, etc., although the effect will be tested.

Wu Jinglian, a famous economist

Macro-regulatory control relies very much on price adjustments, including raising the interest rate and controlling the floating exchange rate.

I am in favour of the central bank to take the measure of allowing a widened range of floating interest rates.

But some possibilities must be considered. The first is that consumption will decrease if the deposit interest rate is raised. The second is that commercial banks' asset value could shrink if the interest rate was raised because there is a large amount of national bonds at the banks. The third is that the pressure of revaluing the RMB will increase after the interest rate is raised.

Li Yang, president of the Financial Research Institute of the Academy of Social Sciences

One needn't worry about whether the interest rate was raised because, whether or not the interest rate is raised there will not be any big difference. The increasing rate of the CPI is the same as last month and less than the expected 5.4 percent, which means that the macro-economic trend isn't becoming worse.

Probing Pensions and Retirement

By Dong Nan

Last week, Hu Xiaoyi, a spokesman for the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, said that the ministry was considering postponing the legal age for retirement to relieve stress on the existing retirement pension system brought about by the aging crisis.

According to Hu, more and more people in China are retiring and joining the group of people who rely on the retirement pension, putting great pressures on the pension system and becoming a major problem in China's social welfare system. Therefore, he says, it is necessary to postpone the age of retirement to make people contribute towards pension insurance longer and postpone their eligibility for a retirement pension.

According to The Labour Law of China released in 1984, men should retire at 60 years of age and women should retire at 50 (55 for female officials) in China.

Hu said that now the research is focusing on women who should retire at 50. He added that many women in their 50s are still in their prime with strong abilities and creative potential. It would be too early for them to retire, Hu concluded.

However, Hu also said that the ministry did not have a timetable to fulfill the new plan, which is now just in the research stage.

Since the pension system affects everyone, many people and experts shared their opinions on the issue following the news release.

He Ping, chief of the Social Security Institution, Ministry of Labour and Social Security

Experts in our institution and I suggested that the government postpone the age for retirement early in 2000. Now, people who are above 60 years old make up more than 10 percent of the population and the proportion will rise continuously and reach the summit in the 2020s. And, of course, the retired population will also increase accordingly. Therefore, the retirement pension is facing a state of falling short of expenditure.

According to our research, in the next 20 years, the retirement pension will face a gap of 70 billion yuan every year. However, if we postpone the age for retirement for one year, the foundation of the retirement pension will gain 4 billion yuan more and reduce the outcome to 16 billion yuan.

Many developed western countries face the problem of an aging population and lay stress on pensions as well, having adopted the policy of postponing the age for retirement too. Some even postpone the retirement age to 67.

However, the policy should not be carried out prematurely; we suggest the age for retirement be postponed to 65 for both men and women in 20 years.

Sang Zhulai, researcher of the Ministry of Personnel

Considering the difficulties of the present retirement pension system, it is possible to postpone the age of retirement, but I think this is not the time to do so.

Now, China has a superfluous human resource – college graduates, laid-off workers, army veterans and peasant labourers migrating to cities – all these put a heavy burden on the employment situation. If we postpone the age of retirement, things would be worse.

Besides, many official organizations are already reducing redundant personnel, and letting those people retire is the most natural, peaceful and convenient method. If

we postpone the age of retirement, this reform would be hard to go on.

What's more, numbers for high-ranking positions are limited at many organizations. If we postpone the age of retirement, and elderly people do not leave their high positions, young people will not be able to advance. This is harmful to introducing people with abilities.

Zhou Guangfu, professor of Politics and Public Affairs, Zhongshan University

Personally, I agree that the age of retirement should be postponed. Internationally, most developed countries pursue the principle that men and women retire at the same age. As I know, in some American states, people retire even at 70.

And I think it would cause trouble for employment since the first and most important way to solving the employment problem is to develop the economy and create more positions. It is better to encourage young people and laid-off workers to create their own careers than to ask the elderly to give up their places. Besides, to solve the employment problem, I think the government should consider shortening the hours of work – for example, let people work four days a week.

Guo Lichang, freelance writer

To postpone the age of retirement, I think the loss would outweigh the gain. Some developed countries adopt the policy that postpones the age of retirement not only to provide more pension insurance, but also a bigger labour force, which is lacking there. But in China this is obviously not the case. If the elderly will not retire, many young people will not be employed.

Besides, the structure of labour is different in China from developed countries. In other countries, most employees are white-collar workers; postponing the age of retirement can make them give full play to their intelligence and precious experience. But, in China, most employees are peasants and physical labourers, or blue-collar workers. Retiring at 65 years of age is too old for them.

In fact, the pension system is not mature in China now. I believe that to solve the problem, the government should improve the system itself. Postponing the age of retirement can help for some time, but not forever.

Jiang Duzhi, retired official, 62 years old

I have been working hard my whole life, and now I am glad that I have retired. I would like to take the time to travel all around and develop some of my hobbies. But if I had retired at 65, or as some experts say, 70 years of age, following some American states, I would be a little too old to enjoy life.

Though my pension and my wife's pension are not much, it is enough, and we are happy with it – not to mention that we have some savings and our son to rely on.

But, as I know, some of my old workmates are not happy with their retired lives. They used to be busy and occupied. Now, they feel lost and have nothing to do at home. In fact, they are experienced and can work as consultants to young people instead of taking young people's places. Maybe they would not mind retiring later.

I think that a more flexible retirement system should be considered to make the elderly who want to retire enjoy their pension and leisure time earlier, and those who don't want to retire to give full play to their abilities and make more contributions to society.



In China, men must retire at 60 years of age and women at 50. Photo by Photocom

By Dong Nan

A research group from the All-China Women's Federation released an unprecedented survey September 2 about their ideas on gender equality targeting policymakers in five national departments.

According to Xiao Yang, leader of the research group, the survey involved 242 high-ranking policymakers from the National People's Congress, the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, the Ministry of Public Health, the State Population and Family Planning Commission and the All-China Women's Federation, which are believed to have a close relationship with policymaking that affects women.

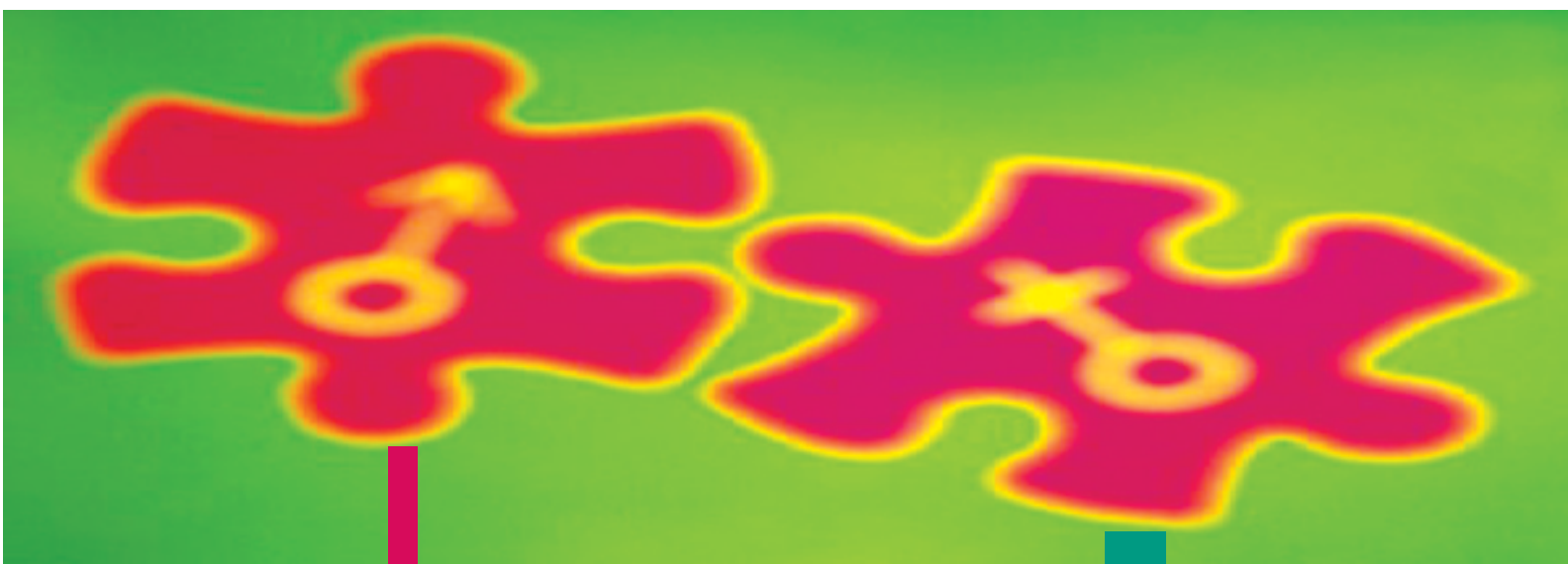
The survey found that most policymakers agree with the principle of gender equality and care about women's rights. However, it also pinpointed some gender prejudices and blind spots that influence public policymaking.

"Although gender equality is the principle in the making of laws and policies, and activists of women's organizations and other agencies are making great efforts to incorporate gender awareness into all work, many policymakers still lack an adequate understanding of gender issues," said Xiao. "Old-fashioned ideas of gender are deep-rooted, and are represented in the process of policymaking in many areas. Thus, at present, there are still some problems and obstacles in the advocacy for raising gender sensitization and gender awareness and for promoting gender equality."

Unfairness in practice
According to the survey, 71.9 percent of policymakers realize that "a policy can bring unfair results to men and women," while 28.1 disagree with the statement. However, 44.6 percent of the respondents believe that there is no unfairness in China's current laws and policies. According to Xiao, this shows that many policymakers are not sensitive enough to gender equality while making and carrying out certain policies.

"Though a law or policy may not be meant to be discriminatory to women, if policymakers do not take gender equality into consideration, unfair things can happen," said Xiao, adding, "But not all policymakers fully realize that."

Xiao cited an example of



the household contract responsibility system, which stipulates that peasants can contract land that belongs to the state for at least 20 years. While this policy seems to have nothing to do with gender equality at first glance, if women marry men in other villages, they will lose their land and there is no land share for them in their husbands' villages. This causes many women to lose their land, which results in inequality.

According to Xiao, such problems exist in the renowned Chinese Project Hope run by the China Youth Development Foundation, which aims to help impoverished children in rural areas go back to school. Most families receiving aid from the project prefer to send their boys to school first, keeping the girls at home to farm. The All-China Women's Federation counts on another project, the Chunlei Plan for Female Children, to target girls specifically.

"Many policies and regulations seem impartial to both genders. However, without taking care of the different results they may bring to different genders and the different demands and interests, and without conscious research and statistics based on gender, discrimination against women can happen in the process," said Xiao, adding, "And our policymakers must be aware of this."

More boys than girls
Since the early 1980s, the sex ratio of babies in most provinces and autonomous regions in China has remained unbalanced. According to China's census, the sex ratio of births in 1981 and 1989 were 108.47 (the ratio of boys and girls is 108.47:100) and 111.92 respectively, and rose to 119.9 in 2000, which is far above the internationally accepted 107

Survey on Gender Equality for Lawmakers Makes Waves

Sources of Survey Subjects		
Organizations	Number of recipients	Percentage
National People's Congress	51	21.1%
Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference	50	20.7%
Ministry of Public Health	38	15.7%
State Population and Family Planning Commission	53	21.9%
All-China Women's Federation	50	20.7%

Gender Awareness of Policymakers on Certain Issues		
	Agree	Disagree
A policy can bring unfair results to men and women	71.9%	28.1%
There is no unfairness in present laws and policies in China	44.6%	55.4%
As long as the economy develops, gender equality will improve	32.6%	67.4%
Gender equality means women can do whatever men can	7.4%	92.6%
Men should focus on careers and women on family affairs	5.4%	94.6%
Quarrels between couples are their private affairs and society should not intervene	4.1%	95.9%

"danger zone." In China, there are now 18 million more boys than girls.

The research on the issue also exposed some problems.

According to the survey, 80 percent of policymakers believe that the skewed sex ratio among babies is caused by the traditional idea of preferring boys to girls and that women are inferior to men in society; 60 percent attribute this to the family planning policy, and 43.5 percent think it is a result of the illegal identification of a fetus's sex.

"Traditional Chinese gender culture holds that boys can carry on the family line, can regulate the family and rule the state, whereas girls are only suitable to stay at home, attend to their husbands and educate children. In real life, women are inferior to men in such areas as politics and employment, and the family input on education and healthcare of girls is also lower than that of boys, thus resulting in family preference for the birth of a boy and choices to abort female fetuses. In this sense, the issue of the unusually unbalanced sex ratio is, first of all, a gender issue, and the most profound representation of the male-centric culture," argued Xiao. "I am glad that most policymakers realize that, and did not take it simply as the result of the family planning policy and illegal identification of a fetus's sex."

However, problems still exist. When asked what they thought of the harm of a high sex ratio among babies, 50.8 percent of the respondents said they thought "it influenced the stability of society," 25.6 percent said "in the future, it would be hard for men to find wives," but only 7.4 percent said "it deprives women of their right to survival."

"When worried for future men's problems of marriage, many policymakers neglect the problem of female babies' rights to survival are being deprived cruelly," said Xiao. "It reveals a lack of gender awareness and the traditional idea of paying more attention to men unconsciously. That is sure to influence policymaking."

Equality and economy

"Gender equality has not improved in many areas in China in the past 10 years," said Xiao. "Along with the development of the economy, the gaps of income and employment rate between the two genders are even larger."

For example, in 1999, the annual incomes of women in urban areas averaged 7,409 yuan, 70 percent of that among men; but in 1990, the number reached 77.4 percent. In rural areas, women's average annual income was 2,368 yuan in 1999, 59.6 of that among men; in 1990, the number was 64.4 percent.

The UN ranks a "gender equality index" every year for countries around the world; in 1994, China ranked No.71. Yet, it falls almost every year – from 2001's No.76 to 2002's No.77 until last year's No.83.

But when asked what they thought of the ranking of China's gender equality in the international society, 44.2 percent of the respondents said the ranking was "rising", 17.8 percent said it was "keeping balance", and only 23.1 percent said it was dropping. The remaining participants said they did not know.

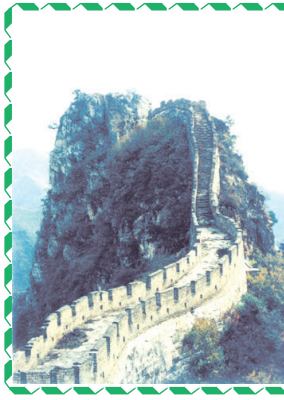
"That brings us to another fact: The development of the economy is not necessarily meant to improve gender equality," said Xiao. "In fact, along with the development of the economy and market economy, women are intended to be in an unfavourable position and need help from policy."

But, in the survey, when asked "Do you think that as long as the economy develops, gender equality will improve?" one third of the policymakers – most of whom are from the National People's Congress, a legislation group – said "yes".

The survey also found that the favourable channel for policymakers to get information about gender equality was via "special lectures," said Xiao. She said that based on the results of the survey, the research group suggested that the All-China Women's Federation should organize lectures for policymakers and release some materials on gender equality.

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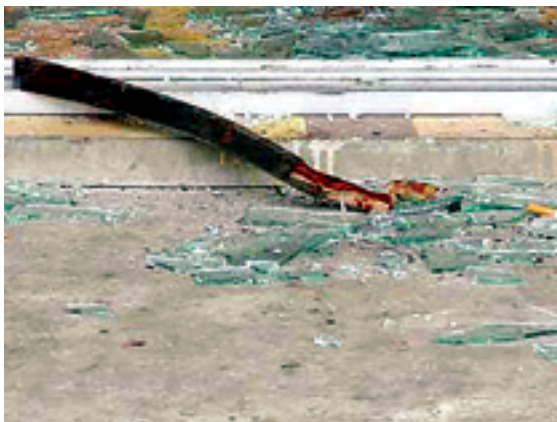
An injured child with mother in hospital



An injured child recovers in hospital after kindergarten attack.



Alleged bag containing explosives



Machete used by kindergarten attacker to stab victims

Kindergarten Stabbing Spree Strikes Again

By Zhou Ying

With the public still reeling from grief over August's school-

stabbing spree in Beijing that left one child dead and 17 others injured, a similar tragedy took place at the Xiao Jianqiao Kindergarten

in Suzhou city, Eastern China's Jiangsu Province, recently.

According to a local news report, 28 children were in-

jured last Friday morning when a man burst into a kindergarten, where all of the students were children of migrant workers, stab-

bing them with a machete. The criminal was found carrying gasoline and a home-made explosive device.

The offender was imme-

diately arrested and all of the injured parties were sent to hospital just in time.

From kindergarten to bloodbath

A local resident of Suzhou city surnamed Qian was the first to witness the tragedy. He told the *Nanfang Daily* last Saturday that he saw a bald man in the kindergarten waving an object among a group of children. "The moment I realized that it was a knife, I was really astonished," he recalled.

According to Qian, the criminal was about 40 years old with dark skin. "He stabbed the children like cutting firewood," Qian recounted, adding: "I saw some children fall over, crying loudly, and then the man set fire to one of the houses." He then called the police.

Shen Xiaolin, a member of the rescue team told *The Beijing News* last Sunday that after they raided the kindergarten, they found a Coca-Cola bottle filled with burning gasoline. "We transferred the children to the first floor and ran upstairs to find the others. However, we found that the door on the second floor was locked," Shen said.

Wang Jintu, another team member, kicked the door open, and police arrested the accused. Wang said that when they went upstairs, he heard cries coming out of a locked room. "The moment I kicked the door open, I saw the criminal, who was wearing sunglasses and shouting at a child as he stabbed him," said Wang.

Gruesome memories linger on

Tian Yongqing and Wang Huiying, an elderly couple who live across from the kindergarten, say they had a sleepless night after witnessing the tragedy. "We will never forget the faces of those frightened children," they told the *Shanghai Morning Post* last Saturday.

"I was watching TV at about 10:00 Friday morning when I heard somebody crying for help," continued Tian. "I then hurried to see what had happened with my wife."

Tian and his wife helped the police transfer the children outside. They said that the moment they rushed to the crime scene, they saw many injured and frightened children sitting on the bed, crying.

"I lifted the bed sheets off a bed to find some children hiding underneath," Wang said. Wang then tried to drag them out, but the children refused, saying, "Bad people will kill us!" The couple took the victims to their home to offer them food and drinks.

Wang recalled that the three teachers at the scene were too frightened to react. According to a report from a local newspaper, they had not received

any first-aid or emergency training, and declined to be interviewed.

In a hospital interview with the *Beijing Star Daily*, Xue Minghui, a four-year-old injured child, said he does not want to go back to school anymore. "The stranger broke into the room, he splashed water (gasoline) everywhere, and then began to stab us," Xue added that there were three "bad people" in total.

The injured parties were rushed to the Suzhou No. 2 People's Hospital, Suzhou Children's Hospital and Wuzhong People's Hospital respectively for surgery and treatment. Reportedly, all of the children are in stable condition.

According to the parent of an injured child, there were actually three criminals involved, but only one was responsible for the stabbing. Some witnesses and rescue workers confirmed that the other two parties fled the scene.

A related department told the *Beijing Morning Post* on Monday that there were indeed three criminals at the scene, although they refused to release further details. "The other two criminals are still at large," it added.

Out of 'retaliation'

Local public security officials told parents that the offender was "retaliating" due to personal issues and that he had written a letter before committing the offence, without elaborating further.

According to Xinhua News Agency, the offender is a 41-year-old man called Yang Guozhu from Jiangsu Province. The agency reported that Yang has four brothers, with one currently in prison and the remaining three with criminal records.

Some parents of the injured children, who are all migrant workers outside of Suzhou Province, said they don't have the money or the know-how to deal with the tragedy. "We cannot stop working to take care of our children, and we really need help from society," cried one of the grief-stricken parents.

Few facts

According to a report from the *Shanghai Morning Post* last Friday, the glass door of the kindergarten was broken and some homemade dynamite was scattered on the ground.

However, local police have refused to confirm this information, and insist they had not found any dynamite.

According to a witness, the criminal brought an ordinary firecracker — not dynamite with him. However, the witness acknowledged that the accused was carrying gasoline and had started a fire.

Journalists who had contacted the kindergarten's principal did not obtain any comments. Reportedly, the principal said that he, too, was a victim.

State Pharmaceutical Reserve Fund System Flawed

By Wang Fang

In August, an anonymous group of industry insiders dubbed "Mao Jiangyu" reported the flaws in the management of the State pharmaceutical reserve fund to the *South China Weekend News*, arousing serious public attention in the midst of frequent natural calamities.

Critics say the main problem lies with the appointed State-owned pharmaceutical enterprises responsible for reserving the State fund that have directed it to other uses, leaving the 2.2-billion-yuan fund nearly depleted. They charge that the current be-

Critics say the main problem lies with the appointed State-owned pharmaceutical enterprises responsible for reserving the State fund that have directed it to other uses, leaving the 2.2-billion-yuan fund nearly depleted.

leaguered fund does not have the capacity to help the State cope in case of a potential emergency.

The State pharmaceutical reserve fund system

The State pharmaceutical reserve fund system was established in the 1970s when the State granted 200 million yuan to build 13 pharmaceutical storehouses in the event of war. Later, the reserves were also earmarked for foreign aid, disaster relief, epidemic prevention and responding to emergencies.

On several occasions, the State had increased investments in the fund and allocated foreign-exchange quotas. By the mid-1990s, the fund topped two billion yuan and the former State Economic & Trade Commission replaced the former State Admissions of Medicine as its new administrator in 1997. (Today, the fund is managed by the State Development Planning Commission.)

For almost 30 years, the State pharmaceutical reserve fund has operated based on the following model: First, the responsible body appoints several State-owned pharmaceutical enterprises as pharmaceutical reserve units. Then, the responsible body provides a list of pharmaceuticals it deems important and allocates

funds to the enterprises. The duty of the appointed enterprises is to prepare the listed pharmaceuticals. These enterprises can then put the pharmaceuticals on the market and renew the reserve by a certain ratio, sending the required amount of pharmaceuticals to disaster-ridden areas.

Problems facing the reserve system

However, some say the system is flawed. According to an official who worked for the State pharmaceutical reserve fund, the system is always in a situation where it does not have enough pharmaceuticals on hand when disaster strikes. He said the reserve enterprises fail to send the necessary pharmaceuticals time and time again saying they have "run out of storage."

According to the unnamed official, when South China's Guangdong Province was hit by disaster in 1996 and the director of the province's pharmaceutical bureau came to Beijing for help, he was rejected by the appointed enterprises. However, in the same year, the State allocated about 30-40 million yuan to the appointed enterprises.

Also in 1996, the former State Admissions of Medicine reported that it "had no capacity to take up the disaster relief and rescue work" and was forced to turn to the Ministry of Finance for help. But the ministry replied: "We just gave you the money; why are you asking again? Where did the money go?"

In 1997 the Ministry of Finance issued a circular calling on an investigation of the pharmaceutical reserve fund for possible embezzlement. The review board concluded that the State had been investing 2.2 billion yuan in the fund and that the actual value of the pharmaceuticals in the storehouses was far less than the total investment.

How were the funds embezzled?

According to a report by the former State Admissions of Medicine, the enormous financial losses were attributed to the following reasons: a proportion of the pharmaceutical payments granted in emergency situations could not be retrieved; some of the reserves were transferred to local departments or other departments in previous reforms; and waste due to inefficient transportation, storage, management and expired medicines.

"Mao Jiangyu" said in a report that some of the expired medicine was a result of "insufficient management," while other cases were downright "suspicious."

A review carried out in 1996 valued the expired Chinese traditional herb *Astragalus Membranaceus* (Huangqi), which is used to complement vitality, at about 400 million yuan. "Mao Jiangyu"

could not help asking: "Why did the pharmaceutical reserve, which aims to provide disaster relief, store so much Huangqi? Do people really need it when they are hit by disaster?"

Apart from inefficiency, the appointed enterprises' extravagant expenses also incurred financial losses. One member of "Mao Jiangyu" revealed that after receiving a large amount of funds from the State, the appointed enterprises held some conferences and arranged for other companies to consume or produce. "However, the money for holding such conferences was spent on sightseeing," Mao Jiangyu said.

In 1996, when an epidemic broke out in Hunan and Guangdong provinces, the State transferred some foreign-exchange quotas, asking a pharmaceutical foreign-trade company to import a batch of badly needed medicine to the affected regions. However, the company used the quotas to import the medicine, which fared well on the domestic market, bringing in huge profits. The company labelled the imported medicine as "disaster relief" to deceive customers.

In a report compiled by the Ministry of Finance in 1996, a pharmaceutical reserve station filed 22.46 million yuan in reserves, which only actually totaled about 7.359 million yuan in 1995. At another station, the cited number of reserve funds reached 20.92 million yuan, although the amount of medicine administered was estimated at a maximum 8 million yuan.

In accordance with the regulation regarding the financial management of the State pharmaceutical reserve fund as stipulated by the Ministry of Finance, 70 percent of the fund granted by the State should be stored as medicine in the appointed reserve units.

Reform is the solution

Since China is a country with complicated geographical and natural conditions, it is often plagued by floods, droughts, earthquakes, typhoons, landslides and acid rain. As a result, diseases and other national emergencies are inevitable, leading to pressures for a stronger pharmaceutical reserve system.

The State pharmaceutical reserve fund plays an important role in assisting the State and the people. For example, when SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) hit China last year, the reserve system supplied the affected areas with medicine and equipment from local reserve stations across the country. However, according to "Mao Jiangyu", this reserve fund is still weak and flawed: It lacks the capacity to provide timely aid when the State and the people need it most.

One anonymous fund insider believes that besides punishing

the inside "corruptionists," reforming the management and operational mechanisms is key to weeding out the flaws in the system.

"Mao Jiangyu" agree: "We don't understand why such a crappy mechanism has not yet been reformed? Why does the State still grant the fund to those suspicious and 'unclean' enterprises?"

According to the insider, when enterprises enter the market economy for more profits, pumping reserve funds into such enterprises is inappropriate. "The enterprises cannot stand up for the government and do not have the ability to be responsible to rescue the disaster," he said. "If we put in the money, which should be used to save lives, we cannot guarantee the safety of (the fund) at all."

Critics suggest the pharmaceutical reserve system should learn from other reserve materials, such as cotton. In China, the State has a strict management system governing the storage of cotton. In 2003, the State established the China National Cotton Reserves Corporation, which was entrusted by the State Council to carry out a vertical management for cotton reserve storehouses in the country. They believe this model can guarantee the safety of State property.

The current reserve system can also learn from the successful practices carried out by local governments. For instance, Zhejiang Province has explored a suitable management system for pharmaceutical reserves, where the pharmaceutical and chemical industry office of the Zhejiang Economic & Trade Commission is responsible for the province's pharmaceutical reserve business.

According to office director Tong Jianxin, Zhejiang Province normally stores 30 million yuan for pharmaceutical reserves, which is shared by two enterprises. However, the 30-million-yuan fund is not paid by the provincial finance ministry. Instead, the provincial government merely assists these enterprises to obtain loans and pay the interest. In this way, the government only pays out about 1 million yuan annually. And since the enterprises can obtain loans easily, they are quite active in reserving pharmaceuticals.

Currently, corresponding organizations are carrying out a thorough investigation of the problems plaguing the State pharmaceutical reserve fund system. In 2001, the former State Economic & Trade Commission conducted an investigation on the fund and financial management of the central pharmaceutical reserve enterprises, regulating the system mechanism, getting acquainted with how local governments settle the province's pharmaceutical reserve work, and summing up the process. However, interview requests to relevant State pharmaceutical reserve supervising departments, State-owned pharmaceutical enterprises receiving the most funding, and the Ministry of Finance, were unsuccessful.

(Source: *South China Weekend News*)

By Zhang Huan

Sun Xun wears many hats. From diligent researcher, to successful salesman, to creative singer, Sun has achieved things that others only dream of. The 33-year-old composer/singer/distributor, released his first music album recently, and his sales experience gave him enough confidence to sell it. But only six years ago, Sun was a laser physicist, conducting research on the most advanced branch of science.

His friend calls him “the crazy doctor.” But Sun’s motto is simple: “Do what you want to do.” **‘I lost my faith in science’**

Tall, quick-witted and talkative, it’s difficult to believe that this long-haired artist type, adorned with rings and necklaces, was once a scientist. “I was totally different before,” Sun admits.

At 21, Sun began his postgraduate studies in laser physics at Tianjin University. As an ambitious and talented young man, Sun set his sights on a reputable subject. His aim: “To be a famous scientist and to win the Nobel Prize.” However, much to his surprise, his experiments did not coincide with those carried out by his classmates, who had already published their findings in famous academic journals. Sun was puzzled. Although he had confidence in his own experiments, he sensed that there was something terribly wrong.

The professor in charge of Sun’s experiments suggested he draw his own conclusions based on the results. Sun then completed his thesis, which ended with a bold conclusion that contradicted his advisor’s findings. He did not expect his thesis to draw attention from the Chinese Academy of Sciences-but it did, leading to an investigation that exposed Sun’s advisor (a well-known scholar in the field) as a fraud. According to Sun, his advisor had encouraged students to alter experimental data to obtain more research funding from the State. Sun’s own experiments and conclusions were submitted as evidence.

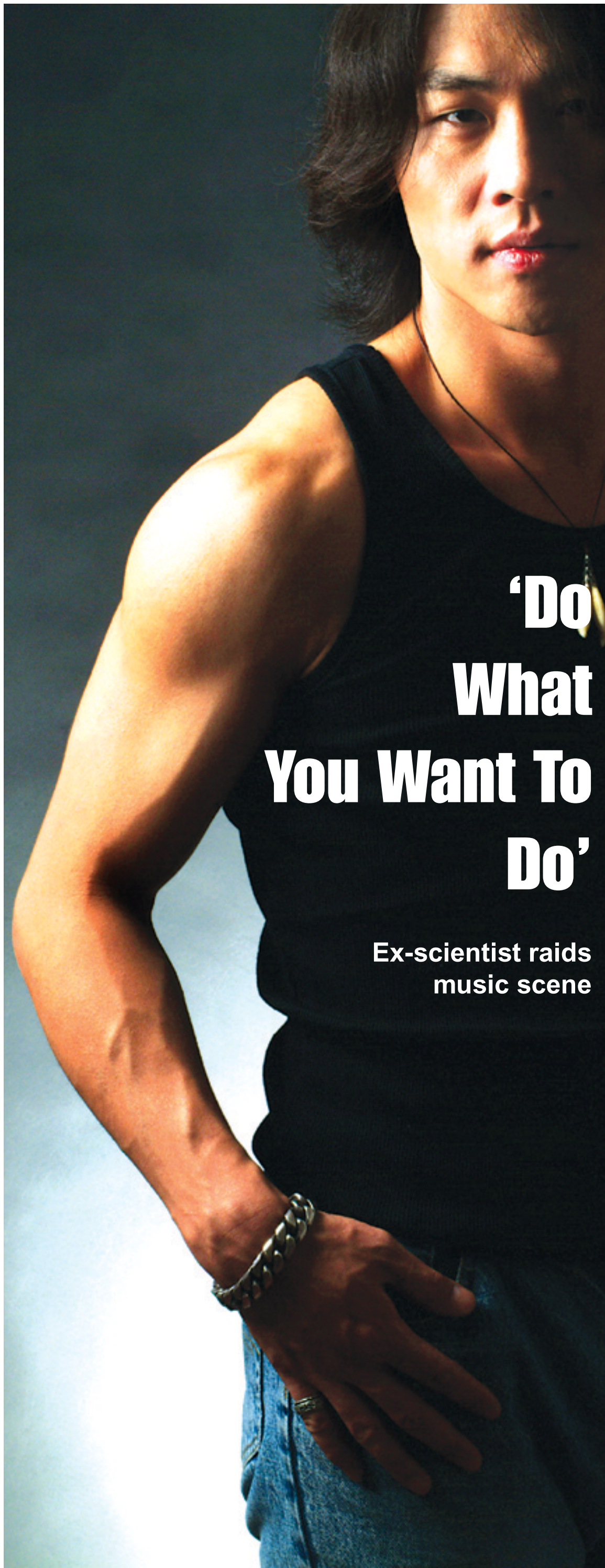
“I still remember the day when I first presented my thesis to my advisor,” recalled Sun. “I gave it to him and then left to consult some literature in the library. One-and-a-half hours later, when I came back from the library, my advisor was still sitting there staring blankly at the ceiling, with my thesis in his hands. He must have known that his cheating was going to be exposed by my thesis.”

Although Sun’s experiment had exposed the truth, he was disappointed: “In my idea, science and art are the most sacred,” he explained. “There should be no cheating. I did not expect that I would meet a cheater. And, because of this, because I did not choose a more suitable subject, I got no academic achievements as I had expected.”

After graduation, Sun continued with his doctorate studies at the Beijing Institute of Technology. He still harboured the dream of making great contributions to science one day. This time, he chose an even more famous advisor and an equally sophisticated subject. For three years, Sun dedicated himself to his laboratory, investing almost 200,000 yuan. But the result was another heavy blow.

“I finally realized that I made the wrong choice. My experiments proved that my theory was feasible only in theory but not in reality,” Sun said. Besides, he also discovered the same pattern of dishonesty in his new environment.

For Sun, the shock was so heavy that he decided to give up his dream. “I believe that my understanding of the subject and my diligence is much better than others’. While I was working hard on my subject and did not prepare myself for anything else, my classmates had taken up practical courses like computer science, and graduated easily with a doctorate after only two-



Ex-scientist raids music scene

and-a-half years’ study only because they chose an easy subject. Since my postgraduate studies, I had been doing the most sophisticated research for six years but got nothing. My classmates at least got well-paid jobs.”

Sun graduated with a PhD after three-and-a-half years of hard work. He received an offer from Nanyang Technological University in Singapore for a post-doctorate degree which he refused because he “had lost faith in science and his dream.” At the time, some of his classmates were working abroad and some had established their own businesses, making an

average \$60,000-70,000 a year, while Sun contemplated his new direction in life.

A new beginning

Stepping out of the laboratory, Sun felt like a “nobody.” He went to Shanghai and chose sales as a new start since the job did not require any professional experience. His first job at the Oak Communications Shanghai Corporation involved selling switchboard parts: He was a born salesman. Sun quickly learned the ropes and closed sales contracts one by one. However, his success as a businessman did not bring him any personal satisfaction. “I am good at dealing with people but,

in my heart, I admire things pure and beautiful,” noted Sun, adding: “Though the job is very suitable for me, I don’t like it.”

In Shanghai, Sun fell in love with a nightclub singer, who brought music - and trouble - to Sun’s world. Sun’s parents did not approve of the woman’s job and educational background which drew a wedge between Sun and his family. But one autumn night, troubled by his relationship, Sun suddenly came up with a melody. He quickly wrote down the tune, which later became his first song, “Think No More.” From then on, Sun began composing music. He produced six songs for his girlfriend to sing at the nightclub - all of which were well received.

“Since then, I have had my second dream - composing music,” he said fondly. “Fortunately, from the death of the first dream to the birth of the second dream, I did not lose my way. With my new dream, my life again became lively, hopeful and full of imagination.”

Later, job offers took Sun and his girlfriend to southern Chinese cities like Shenzhen and Guangzhou, where Sun continued to compose music. But the hope for more opportunities lured the couple back to the capital.

“Coming back to Beijing I had no job and no place to live,” recalls Sun. “My friend Wang Wang received us and we lived at the border area between the city and the countryside where I worked hard to learn and practice musical composition.”

Sun will never forget the harsh winter of 1999 when he was unemployed and owed thousands of yuan.

“We lived a poor life. I remember every afternoon around 4:00 I went to the village to buy vegetables, wearing a coat borrowed from Wang Wang. I always met a flock of pigs, watching them reeling and swaggering in the setting sun, which made me feel that life was still hopeful. I think I will remember that scene forever.”

As he worked on his music, Sun also looked around for jobs. But this time he got the cold shoulder from most potential employers. The only job offer he received paid 600 yuan a month.

“On the day when I got the job offer, Wang Wang was employed by Lucent Technologies with an annual pay of 170,000 yuan. We both applied for the position but I was refused.”

Sun and his girlfriend lived in grim circumstances for six months.

In April 2000, an Internet music company contacted Sun. At the interview, the employer asked Sun how many people he thought there were like him in China, to which he replied: “Only me.” Sun was hired on the spot as the company’s general music inspector for promoting singers and writing music reviews, which became popular on the Net.

After some time, Sun moved to his present company, Beijing PolyStar Digidisc, and returned to sales, where his talents again resurfaced. He settled contracts with many transnational companies like IBM, Sony and Ericsson. “I have been doing sales for six years. I made quick progress. I communicate with the best corporations in the world, which benefits me a lot.”

More ‘down time’

After two years Sun broke up with his girlfriend because of their divergent ideas on music. “She prefers to get in contact with the so-called ‘people in the music circle’ and did not believe in my music,” Sun charged. “I composed scores of songs for her, many of which were well received. I remember one time when we were recording a demo for a new song, she could not remember the melody or the lyrics, which disappointed me so much that I cried. I said to her: ‘You don’t care for the song at all so you don’t deserve my songs.’ “

Sun says he is open to feedback about his songs as long as the comments are “true to the listener’s heart.” He believes that there’s no absolute



Sun Xun, scientist-turned-singer

criterion in music since different people have different tastes. “Everybody can compose and everybody can sing. The significance of good music lies in that it can make life more noble and more beautiful.”

In almost six years Sun composed over 50 songs, from which he chose 10 for his first album. He says he loves composing more than everything else: “Composition is the only purity in my heart whereby I can express myself. My life is switching between day and night. At daytime, I work, communicating with different people, but at night I compose, being true to myself. Though I am in a practical world, I am not influenced by it. I chase for the value of life itself.”

He also says there is no so-called “theme song” on his album. “Every song on the album expresses a different idea. Compared to the melodies, I pay more attention to the lyrics which are my understanding and thinking in life.”

The first song on the album, “More Time For Yourself” - also the name of the album - is what Sun wants to tell everyone. And he says the inspiration for this particular song came from his sister.

“When I was in Shanghai, my sister and her husband once came to visit me from Singapore. They sang Karaoke at my home till midnight and, at last, had to stop only because we were afraid of disturbing the neighbours.”

Sun describes his sister and her husband as workaholics who were once popular singers in



college. Although they make a lot of money, Sun says they don’t have time to enjoy themselves.

“That night, at 2 o’clock in the morning,” Sun continues, “I got up and wrote down a song. But I didn’t expect that the same condition would fall on me. I chose this composition because I liked the feeling of freedom, but now my work confines me. I could not just sit down in the afternoon sun to compose songs.”

Sun is already preparing his second album, “Black Eyes Under Yellow Hair,” which addresses people born in the 1980s.

He is confident about the success of his new album even though he is a novice in the field. He believes that with his advanced sales experience he will sell one million copies. Among his many marketing strategies, one is “the package sale”, where customers get a free album when they buy enough company products. Talking about this, Sun reveals his “daytime” side.

Whether it’s musical composition or scientific research, Sun says he wants to do something that will influence the world or leave his mark. “I love both the works of Dali and Van Gogh, but if you ask me to choose one of them I would choose Dali. Though Van Gogh’s works are wonderful, he could not influence the world and people in his lifetime: He only sold one painting.”



Artist Sun Xun basks in glory
Photos Provided by Sun Xun



By Sabu
The just concluded 61st Venice International Film Festival has drawn to the attention of the world the extent to which this "art movie" event has been commercialized, or rather Americanized. In the competition movie list, American movies this year made up a larger part than ever before.

"European films are fairly good, but we can't forget the American films we saw," said Marco Muller, who was named organizer of the world's oldest cinema competition just months before it was set to kick off. This festival was widely seen to be the launching pad for Hollywood blockbusters in the European market, with Hollywood setting its sights on markets abroad to keep feeding this overproducing movie-making machine.

The final result was unveiled at the close of the 12-day Venice Film Festival on September 12. British director Mike Leigh's *Vera Drake*, a film about an underground abortionist in 1950s England, won the Golden Lion for best picture. The runner-up was Spanish film *Mar Adentro* (*The Sea Within*), by *The Others* director Alejandro Amenabar. The film had been touted as a possible best-picture winner, but instead it took home the Silver Lion Jury Grand Prix. Star Javier Bardem won best actor for his role as a quadriplegic man who wants to end his life. The Silver Lion for best director went to Korean director Kim Ki-duk for *Bin Jip*. Some 22 films were in contention for the Golden Lion.

To the disappointment of many in China, the only

Chinese movie in the competition, *The World*, directed by former underground director Jia Zhangke, failed to pick up any honors, though it has been praised by critics and moviegoers around the world and went into the festival burdened with high expectations.

World fails to conquer the West

The World is Jia Zhangke's fourth feature film, but only his first foray into mainstream film. Chinese people have become somewhat accustomed to the positive receptions to Chinese films at international film festivals. Zhang Yimou's *To Live* won best picture and best actor at 1994's Cannes Film Festival, Xia Yu gained Best Actor in Jiang Wen's *In the Heat of the Sun* at 1994's Venice Film Festival, and Zhang Yimou's *Not One Less* won the Golden Lion at Venice in 1999. In recent years, however, Chinese filmmakers have been returning from Venice and Cannes empty handed, at least from the major categories of competition.

The World, about several young people who leave their village to work in a big city full of temptations, reflects the lives of millions of migrant workers in today's China. Unlike *Vera Drake* and *The Sea Within*, which deal with high profile international issues such as abortion and euthanasia, it is not easy for *The World* to touch those Western judges.

The World is the first film by the avant-garde director to be entered in a film festival with the approval of the Chinese film authorities. Jia said he was "very happy and relaxed" about being in the competition, but when asked how confident he was about gaining

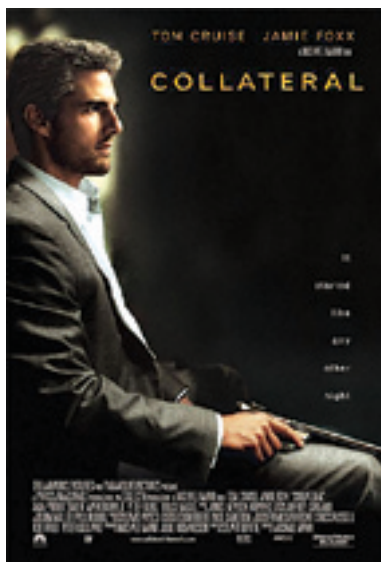
a prize, he replied, "I don't care too much about that. I see the festival as a chance to savor the pleasure brought by movies, rather than to compete." After the result came out, Jia responded, "To be honest, I feel a little sorry. But I've tried my best, since so many unpredictable factors involved."

As a leading figure of what is known as the "Sixth-Generation" of film directors in China, Jia Zhangke is not well-known to Chinese audiences. His previous films have never been officially approved or publicly shown here, even though some of them have been critically acclaimed and won awards internationally, such as Berlin Film 1997 Netpac Award winner *Xiao Wu* (*Pickpocket*), Venice 2000 Netpac Award winning film *Platform* (*Zhan Tai*) and competition film of Cannes 2002, *Unknown Pleasures* (*Ren Xiao Yao*).

Participation in the 61st Venice Film Festival at least has gained *The World* a considerable amount of attention, which may give it a boost at the currently running Toronto Film Festival. The movie marks the end of Jia Zhangke's status as an "underground" director. The public release date in China has been set in October. "As for the film itself, whether audiences can understand it doesn't count," Jia said, in the future, he said he wants to learn all about the market, and how to more effectively sell his films.

Dilemma between art and market

The Venice Film Festival is the longest running film festival in the world. With a history of 72 years, it has gained a reputation for showcasing a unique selection of avant-garde movies



Jia Zhangke's *The World*, about migrant workers, failed to pick up a prize at Venice. Euthanasia and abortion were the themes of the winning two films, while Hollywood continued to raise its profile at the festival.

since 1932. The free air of application and selection has always been an attraction for young and talented directors. Prestigious directors such as Akira Kurosawa, Kenji Mizoguchi and Andrei Tarkovskii first rose to fame in Venice. Chinese director Zhang Yimou, and Hou Xiaoxian and Cai Mingliang from Taiwan were also awarded and internationally recognized there. However, this venerable festival has been confronted with more and more challenges, mostly of a financial nature, of late.

This year, Marco Muller, the new festival director, has introduced a reform to boost the status of the festival. The opening gala featured *The Terminal*, with Steven Spielberg and Tom Hanks on hand. Later, Nicole Kidman shimmered in with her reincarnation picture, *Birth*. Meanwhile heavy hitters Robert De Niro, Angelina Jolie and Will Smith were promoting voice-overs for the animated *Shark Tale*. Other stars present included John Travolta, Tom Cruise, Scarlett Johansson and Quentin Tarantino.

Faced with great challenges, Muller insists he can't sit back and continue to reject commercial films. If Venice wants to steadily hold its own as one of the two great European and world festivals, it cannot but look to Cannes. The Cannes festival will not be easy to match, not only because it is host to an important parallel movie market, but also because Cannes is far flashier than the Lido, he recently told the ANSA news agency.

Hollywood films premier-

ing in Venice, including Jonathan Demme's remake of *The Manchurian Candidate*; Spike Lee's *She Hate Me*; Gregg Araki's *Mysterious Skin*; and *Sky Captain and the World of Tomorrow* with Jude Law, Gwyneth Paltrow and Angelina Jolie have surely added gloss to the festival.

Where to now?

The Venice Film Festival was once in a poor situation because the prize winning movies so often were artistic successes but box office failures. Last year, Director Peter Greenaway proposed a seminar - "Cinema is Dead", but was turned down by festival director Moritz de Hadeln, since he received a total of 1,591 entries that year, an event record. "This all goes to prove that not only is cinema not dead," de Hadeln said at the time, "But also that the selection of the program for the 60th Festival was rather hard... Cinema is not just alive, it is very much so."

This time, the organizers have made efforts to revitalize the movie market while keeping moviegoers from fading into obscurity. Although the shaky organization of this year's festival shows there is still room for improvement, the glitz of the Hollywood stars seems to have rekindled the Venice Festival for a brighter future.

It will certainly be a loss if the Venice Film Festival became Cannes II. No matter the time, tradition is always a double-edged sword, and maintaining its exclusiveness will be an impediment as well. For this country of the New-Realism tradition, its film festival still has many new realities to face in the future.

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What's on DVD

By Jiang Haoshu



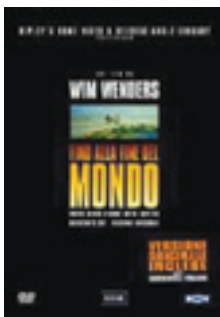
A Collection of Greek Films

For those still hankering for entertainment Greek style now that the Olympics are over, this package will allow you to tour the country again. Includes five diverse films: *Hard Good-byes: My Father*, *Stakaman*, *Peppermint*, *The Only Journey of His Life*, and *Fading Light*. DVD 5, Greek with Chinese and English subtitles.



Theo Angelopoulos: Three Films

Containing three masterpieces by the "Father of Greek Cinema," this collection is a panorama on modern Greece, including award-winning *Thiassos*, *O* (*The Travelling Players*, 1975), *Meres Tou 36* (*Days of 36*, 1972) and *Kynighoi*, *Oi* (*The Hunters*, 1977). DVD 5, Greek with Chinese and Japanese subtitles.



Fino Alla Fine Del Mondo

Until the End of the World is a trilogy by Wim Wenders, filmed in five months across 15 cities in eight countries on four continents. While the lovers in the film tread the earth in search of light and sight, the audience is also compelled to look at life as an odyssey of love and hope. Director's cut. DVD 5, French, English with Chinese and Italian subtitles.

Long Live Chekhov!

By Yu Shanshan

In Beijing, more and more plays seem to be staged every year. Theater audiences are growing, as more people accept drama as a viable form of entertainment. They go into the theater, sit down, watch the show and get up and go home, more often than not unchallenged and unmoved.

A production from Israel at the People's Art Theatre last Tuesday challenged this status quo, with a poetic play titled *Requiem*.

Thanks for this breakthrough, firstly, should go to Anton Chekhov, and secondly, to the National Theatre Company of China's first International Festival of Theater, which runs through this month. To mark the 100th anniversary of the death of Chekhov, the festival is titled "Chekhov Forever," and all five plays presented under it are based on Chekhov's writings. So far, two of the plays have finished their run and the third has just opened.

The first play, *Platonov*, was discovered untitled after Chekhov's death. It was performed by the National Theatre Company from September 1 to 9 at Tianqiao Theater. Directed by Wang Xiaoying, the production was typical of the company's style - a beginning-to-end time line (a day and a night in the life of a group of wealthy inhabitant's of a Russian estate), an abstract stage set designed by Liu Kedong, furnished with a few chairs, and Guo Jinglin's authoritative portrayal of schoolmaster Platonov - his love affair with four women, his inner struggle and inevitable death.

Then came the three-day performances of *Requiem*, by Tel Aviv-based Cameri Theatre. Loosely building upon three of Chekhov's short fictions, *Rothschild's Fiddle*, *In the Ravine*, and *Misery*, the play conveys a near-death sense, and at the same time, represents the primitive attraction of acting, and watching, drama.

People dominated the stage - the log cabin, the stove, the donkey, the willow and flying birds were all portrayed by people. The musical accompaniment was provided by a five-piece band who were the real soul and emotion of the play. After seeing the play, Beijing critics, usually so aloof, seemed overcome with the need to put into words exactly what aspect of the production was the most moving.

Last weekend, the Russian National Youth Theatre's *Cherry Orchard* gave Beijing audiences a true sense of the atmosphere of Chekhov's homeland. Overall the play was well performed, although the



Requiem (top), *The Russian National Youth Theatre's Cherry Orchard* (below), and *Platonov* (right). Photos by Li Yan



Chinese translation screened above the stage gave the production a somewhat stilted effect. The layers of long white translucent curtains, which served to divide the stage into the many rooms of the large villa, created a beautiful, poetic effect.

The two remaining plays are *Chekhov's Shorts*, presented by Theatre Smith Gilmour of Canada, from September 23 to 25 at Chaoyang Theater's 9 Theater, which combines some of Chekhov's short fictions together in one play. The other is a Chinese version of the *Cherry Orchard*, produced by Lin Zhaohua Drama Studio, staged at Tianqiao Theatre.

Rock Review

Electro Pop

By Wang Yao

Electronic duo Long Kuan Jiu Duan are challenging Taiwan-based F.I.R with their first album *Wo Ting Zhe Zhong Yinyue de Shi-hou Zui Ai Ni* (*I love you the most when I listen to this kind of music*), released on September 8 on the Jing Wen label.

Vocalist and composer Long Kuan has collaborated on and off since 1997 with guitarist Tian Peng, whose nickname is Jiu Duan. Tian is also singer and guitarist



with the ground breaking electronic band, Supermarket. Just 24, Long went to London in

1998, where she formed the punk band Mikabomb (Mika is her English name) and released the song *Super Sexy Razor Happy Girls* the next year. In 2002, Long came back to China and began performing with Tian in a series of international electro-music festivals.

The hit from the album *Nobody Is Like Me* has topped local charts for several weeks. *Lotus* (*Lianhua*), in Long Kuan' words, is a happy song because of its rhythm and the lyrics, describing the happiness of starting life afresh. The improvisation, *Strong* (*qiang*), with the involvement of renowned engineer Zhang Yadong, has a relaxed, bossa nova feel.

WORLDWIDE

Deauville Festival Awards Prize to 'Grace'

The Deauville Film Festival awarded its top prize on Sunday to *Maria Full of Grace*, a



Sandino and Marston

documentary-like tale of the travails of a teenage drug runner from Colombia. The wrenching feature debut from writer-director Joshua Marston tells the story of a pregnant 17-year-old who swallows rubber-wrapped heroin pellets to smuggle them by plane to New York.

Nicole Kassell's *The Woodsman*, starring Kevin Bacon as a child molester trying to build a new life after 12 years in prison, won the festival's jury prize. Director Claude Lelouch headed the 10-member jury that judged 10 movies in the main competition. The 30-year-old festival at the Normandy resort, which started September 3, is a European showcase for mainly American movies. (AP)

Testino Photo Marks UK Prince Harry's 20th Birthday

Britain's Prince Harry was captured in *Charles, William fits of and Harry* laughter in a picture released Monday to mark his 20th birthday this week.

Taken by photographer Mario Testino, the picture shows Harry leaning forward with his face down, while his father Prince Charles and 22-year-old brother Prince William are facing the camera and smiling broadly. "They were not laughing at anything in particular," said Testino. "It's just the way they relate to each other. They seem to have a uniquely close father-son relationship."

The Sun tabloid said the photo looked like "a dodgy holiday snap" and attached a "quality control" sticker, saying "to improve your pictures make sure subjects look at camera." (Reuters)



Charles, William fits of and Harry

Pacino's Shylock Draws Oscar Buzz

William Shakespeare may have shuffled off this mortal coil 400 years ago, Al Pacino



but his take on fundamentalism has warnings for today, in a new movie version of *The Merchant of Venice* starring Al Pacino.

The film is already drawing whispers of Oscar potential for Pacino's tortured rendering of Shylock the money lender - and its North American release was set for late this year to meet Academy Award 2005 requirements.

The Merchant of Venice, a tale of romance and revenge, is one of the Bard's most popular plays, yet until now never made it to the big screen, though Orson Welles had hoped to film it. (AFP)

Designers Diverge on Spring Styles

What do women want in their closets? Choices - and that's what they'll have



Donna Karan

next season. The looks ranged from geisha to Palm Beach princess to New York City hipster as Behnaz Sarafpour, Lilly Pulitzer and Donna Karan for DKNY presented their spring 2005 collections Sunday.

Freedom to express your own personal style is emerging as a top trend during New York Fashion Week, said Joan Kaner, senior vice president and fashion director for Neiman Marcus.

Karan's DKNY collection, inspired by the streets of Manhattan, included a floral embroidered linen skirt in green "representing the city's urban gardens" and a mosaic Jacquard coat shown with a beaded mosaic camisole, fashioned after the tiles in the city's underground subways. (AP)

Edited by Chen Si

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Medical Professionals Needed, Stat!

By Xie Lixue

Medicine is a booming field in China, and a medical career has become the seventh most desirable in China providing the second best annual salary, averaging around 45,000 yuan, a survey done by the job placement website ChinaHR has shown.

Among the jobs on offer are posts as research and development workers, sales and marketing directors, over-the-counter drug sales directors, medical representatives and pharmacists.

With the China government encouraging domestic and foreign investment in the medical field, training and experience in medicine is sure to be a prescription for career success and high demand far into the future.

Work skills over book smarts

Unlike some sectors where education background requirements are high, many hospitals and other medical industry businesses put more emphasis on candidates' work experiences, professional skills and personalities. Medical sales representatives, for example, need to have strong communications skills and be able to adjust to different circumstances, while patience and dedication are required traits for clinical research associates.

Educational achievement often has little bearing on career development in medicine in China, said Jennifer Jin head of the human resources department at Novartis Pharma Ltd.

Positions on offer at job fairs targeted especially at the medical industry are unlikely to require applicants to hold master's or doctoral degrees.

Competence plus experience

Of course, that does not mean academic background is not important to securing a job in the medical field. Entry-level jobs may be open to those with sales savvy or other professional skills, but top positions still require plenty of book learning. It is a combination that can be difficult to find in today's pool of job hunters.



Demand for top medical professionals is increasing across China.

Photo by Photocom

Li Yongtao, who has represented his employer Beijing Dongfang Boai Biology and Technology Co. at some job fairs, said his company was looking for senior managers and medical advisors but had yet to find enough qualified candidates for the high-powered positions.

"There are few talented people ca-

pable of meeting our demands, even though we provide very competitive salaries," Li told *Beijing Today*.

A survey conducted by Beijing Taihe Consulting Co. revealed there was only one licensed pharmacist in China to every 10 open positions. By the end of this year, the number of licensed

pharmacists was expected to hit around 130,000, while there would be total demand for more than 200,000, the survey found.

Fields with futures

As domestic companies in the medical field get their hands on better equipment, they also come in contact with more international business concepts and medical realms expanding around the world. Demand for domestic and overseas graduates in such areas as medicine and biochemistry is high in China, especially among firms in the fields of health consultation, nursing and advanced research and development of new medicines.

Nutritionists, sports medicine practitioners and other professionals in relatively new fields of medicine in China face rising demand as lifestyles in the country change. More than one million nurses will be needed by 2015, with demand increasing by an average of 11,000 nurses a year, according to a government-sponsored report issued this year. Continued technological development and skyrocketing funding will also open many exciting opportunities in the cutting-edge fields of medical research and pharmaceutical development.

Medical Sector Job Fairs

Dongcheng Rencai Job Fair

Time: September 21; regular fairs held every Tuesday and Friday
Venue: Jiangzhaikou, Dongcheng District
Organizer: Dongcheng Rencai Job Market
Tel: 6425 5479

Beijing Rencai Job Fair

Time: October 15, November 5, November 26; regular fairs held every Friday
Venue: Beijing Rencai Market, northwest of Yonghegong Qiao, North Second Ring Road, Dongcheng
Organizer: Beijing Talent Service

Center

Tel: 6428 6699

National Library Job Fair

Time: occasional medical sector fairs; regular fairs on Tuesdays and Thursdays
Venue: Wenhui Building, National Library, Baishiqiao, Haidian District
Organizer: National Library
Tel: 8854 4114

On the Internet:

Second Online Recruitment for International Medical and Pharmaceutical Positions

Time: until September 30 (started September 13)

Website: www.healthr.com, www.chinatalent.com.cn
Organizer: China International Talent Development Center
Email: health@healthr.com
Tel: 6897 7508/09/10 ext. 3626

Famous Medical Institutions and Medicine Companies Recruitment Online

Time: October 15 - November 15
Website: www.chinahrr.com
Organizer: ChinaHR.com
Email: ServiceBJ@chinahr.com
Tel: 8526 1188 ext. 8100

Corporate HR

By Xie Lixue

On Tuesday, Connie Kang, senior human resources manager, and Lili Zhang, country staffing manager, of Microsoft China, answered *Beijing Today's* questions about the company's corporate culture, recruitment methods and employee training.

Beijing Today: Please describe Microsoft's corporate culture.

Kang: Microsoft China established its Beijing branch in 1992. Since then, we have been active in China and have been enthusiastic and sincere about developing our business.

Attention to detail, perseverance, progress and dedication are core values at Microsoft.

BT: When interviewing future employees, do you have any special meth-

ods for testing applicants?

Zhang: Usually candidates go through several rounds of interviews with a panel that includes four to ten interviewers. The HR manager often tests their values and emotional quotient (EQ), while department managers raise questions about professional knowledge and work capabilities.

Based on applicants' answers, we can infer whether they are good at communicating, logical and honest.

BT: Do you recruit recent university graduates?

Zhang: We recruit new graduates from majors related to technology and computer science.

BT: What career prospects do you promise or offer staff?

Kang: At Microsoft, we provide career planning for all employees.

Every year, every employee has the opportunity to talk about his or her future plan in the company with management. For instance, if a technician wants to shift to the sales department or a researcher wants to be involved in technical projects, managers can give them advice and facilitate such moves.

BT: Please describe Microsoft's training system.

Kang: Life-long study is a key concept at Microsoft. We suggest employees do 70 percent of their learning at their jobs, get 20 percent from colleagues and managers and pick up 10 percent through training programs.

An employee's first year at Microsoft

is usually called a learning period. He needs to study the corporate values, rules, culture, future tasks and policies.

In the second half of the year, he learns how to manage his tasks, plan future career and receive professional trainings designed by each department.

BT: What advice do you have for people interested in working at Microsoft?

Kang: First is have a healthy attitude, which means you have an open mind, can accept different ideas, cooperate well and pursue constant progress.

Second is to possess strong professional competence.

Third is to cultivate your EQ, such as communication skills and problem-solving abilities.

Microsoft Values Open Minds, Competence, EQ

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Email: Flora2@sina.com

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Contact: sun198052@yahoo.com.cn

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Interested? Contact Mr. Li at: 13641299276, or

Email: wanglijiali@126.com

Female, Beijinger, 35 years old, B.A. degree, majored in English, looking for part-time job as editor (humanities-related), mandarin teacher or translator.

Tel: 67343067

Email: wlj6166@yahoo.com.cn

The New Century High School in Zhuozhou (60 kilometers south of Beijing), Hebei Province, is looking for native English speakers to teach English part-time. Chinese capability preferred. Four classes each month. Workloads and wages open to discussion. Please send resumes to: Feida Group Co. Ltd., Da Shiqiao Bei, Zhuozhou, Hebei

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Send your resumes to: hr@ynet.com.

(You are welcome to send positions offered and wanted info to: qyi@ynet.com. Beijing Today does not take any responsibility for the accuracy and authenticity of the information published in this column.)

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BEIJING TODAY
今日北京

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《北京青年报·房地产版(英文版)》是《北京青年报》每周五推出的房地产相关的广告专版,其英文版随报发行媒体优势不言而喻。根据房产客户的需求,让公司决策层直接阅读到相关内容,更具针对性,力事使客户的广告效力发挥至最大!

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Good Education, Central Campus, Fast Food

It may be the youngest university in New Zealand, but Auckland University of Technology (AUT) is by no means less prestigious than the country's other institutions of higher learning.

AUT was founded in 1859 as the Auckland Technical School. The school has long enjoyed a strong reputation for its technical and scientific courses, though it only moved up from a college to a government-recognized university in 2000.

Nowadays, AUT offers a wide range of courses in other fields, including business, art and design and health sciences. It is the only university in New Zealand

to provide undergraduate and graduate degrees in the hospitality management field.

Des Grayton, pro vice-chancellor (international) of AUT, was *Beijing Today's* guest in the Study Abroad Salon this Monday, when he chatted with readers about the university's faculties and campus – which includes its own McDonald's restaurant.

Basics and subjects:

Compared with the other seven universities in New Zealand, what are AUT's advantages?

— Jackie Zhang

1. Quality of teaching. 2. Highest graduate employment rate

in New Zealand. 3. We teach in smaller classes. 4. High level of student satisfaction. 5. We have a Chinese Club, which arranges mentoring, academic support and social events.

What academic areas does AUT focus on?

— playgirl

Major areas include: art and design, communication, applied science, business, computer science and information technology, engineering, hospitality management, health sciences and languages.

Does AUT stress developing sports and the arts?

— white clothes

Yes we do. We have a school

of sport and recreation and very good faculties. Also we have a school of art and design and a faculty of humanities.

A member of the 2000 Olympic Chinese Basketball team is completing her degree in this school!

I know AUT has two campuses in Auckland. What subjects are provided at each?

— eye to eye

The city campus has the business faculty, where most Chinese students are located. The North Shore campus has health studies and sports. That campus is 15 minutes from the city center.

Do you have any joint programs in China?

— onion-kid

No, we do not at this stage have joint programs with Chinese universities.

I am studying law in New Zealand and wonder how I would be assessed if I wanted to study at AUT.

— weslee

AUT does not have a law school. If you wish to change your program to business, AUT has a commercial law major and you would be assessed for credit depending on the papers you have successfully completed at the other New Zealand school.

Chinese students:

How many students does your university have? And how many Chinese students?

— host

There are about 25,000 students at AUT and about 1,000 students are from the PRC.

Which subjects do Chinese students focus on?

— batman

Most Chinese students study business, hospitality and computer information sciences. An increasing number are enrolled in health sciences.

Business and computer and information sciences have the most Chinese students.

Teaching and applying:

Is teaching at AUT career-oriented? How does the university help students start their careers?

— mooncake

Yes, all AUT programs are focused on careers and include industry and clinical placements. AUT has the highest graduate employment rate of the eight New Zealand universities.

The most popular subjects for the job market are hospitality and tourism industry, information and communications technology, accountancy and nursing.

I suggest you look at the New Zealand immigration website, www.immigration.govt.nz, which lists employment areas of high demand.

What are basic entry requirements at AUT?

— gorilla

The minimum English language requirement for entry is IELTS 6.0 with a minimum of 5.5 in each band. Applicants should also have academic experience equivalent to 13 years of school.

To obtain a visa to study in New Zealand, students must



Des Grayton

Photo provided by AUT

show that they have a minimum of NZ\$10,000 in addition to tuition fees.

Can I forward my application directly to you?

— elephant

You should send your application to jane.ma@aut.ac.nz. We also have an AUT staff member working in Beijing. Her email address is tracey.xu@aut.ac.nz.

Campus life and activities:

I know you have a Chinese speech competition. How many students took part this year? How many students are studying Chinese on your campus?

— onion-kid

The competition was held on August 21 and was organized by the Auckland Chinese Language Association, of which all the Chinese section staff are members. This is the eighth year the event has been held.

Approximately 100 students are enrolled in the Bachelor of Arts (Chinese) program and participate in the Chinese speech contest each year.

Can I find a part-time job on campus?

— monkeyking

Students are entitled to work up to 15 hours a week if they are in a program of study of two years or longer. There is no part-time work on campus, but we have a student job search service to help you find a job.

Does AUT celebrate its founding date and how do you celebrate Christmas? It must be fun to celebrate Christmas in summer!

— strawberry125

We celebrate Christmas and New Year, but do not particularly celebrate the date of the foundation of AUT.

We enjoy Christmas picnics at the beach and barbecues. It is wonderful to have Christmas in the summer. European students really enjoy the novelty of a warm Christmas.

Immigration:

Is it easy to immigrate to New Zealand after graduation?

— monkeyking

The current points required for immigration to New Zealand are 110. You will easily have 110 points on completion of a degree here. The emphasis in New Zealand is on the immigration of skilled migrants.

The New Zealand immigration service website at www.immigration.govt.nz offers more information.

(Edited by Zhang Nan)

Notice

The last guest in *Beijing Today's* Focus on New Zealand will be Wayne Angus, deputy director (international) at the University of Otago.

The University of Otago, New Zealand's first university, is a comprehensive university that offers degrees in a wide range of fields.

You are welcome to log into our website at: <http://bjtoday.ynet.com>; or forward your questions to the host Ayi at: ayi@ynet.com.

Time: 1-2 pm, Monday, September 20

通知

“留学聊天室”之“新西兰之夏”的最后一位客人将是奥塔古大学国际部主任，Wayne Angus先生。

欢迎大家届时光临我们的网站：<http://bjtoday.ynet.com>。您也可以把问题发送到主持人阿义的信箱，由他帮您提问：ayi@ynet.com。

时间：周一（9月20日），下午1点到2点。

Finding a Home for Studying in Australia

By Alan Wang

Finding a place to live is a matter that all foreign students in Australia must come to grips with. Few will be so lucky as to find a great place soon after they arrive in the country and most students end up moving to better abodes during their time at school.

While I was in Australia, I moved five times, less than many Chinese students, and tried all kinds of living arrangements. Different choices have their pros and cons, so students should try to find what is most suited to them and their needs rather than follow some general definition of what is best.

Home-stay:

Home-stay means living in the house of a local family. Chinese students who go to Australia for high school do not have a choice in where they live, and because of their youth, most are given home-stay arrangements in which their host parents act as their temporary guardians in Australia.

Because they are over 18 years of age, foreign university students in Australia are freer to choose accommodation.

Living with a local family has some strong points, including near immersion in English and Australian culture. Many fees, such as gas and electricity, are paid by the landlords – all students have to do is pay the rent on time.

The downsides are that rent can be very high and some landlords may have certain rules, like no using the phone, bathing for over five minutes, or having friends over. Having children running around can make it hard to study.

Dormitories and campus accommodation:

Living conditions on university campuses are almost invariably nice and students can choose to live alone or with others. Campus accommodations are usually split into two grades, normal and luxury. Luxury level includes cafeteria meals, which tend to be much more expensive than cooking for oneself, but at either level, campus living is more costly than renting a place off campus.

Renting and subletting:

Overseas students use the new term “second landlord” to describe students who rent big houses or apartments and then sublet rooms to others at reasonable to high rents to reduce their own economic burdens.

It's an attractive idea, but there are risks and second landlords have to be able to put up two-to-four months' complete rent at first. That means if rooms are not rented in a few weeks, landlords can stand to lose serious money. Plus, most places come unfurnished, so landlords have to pay for appliances and furniture too.

Therefore, a better route is to rent a house with one or several friends and split the payments.

Renting a room in a larger apartment generally costs less than home-stays, especially if you share the room with another person.

Edited by Zhang Nan



Cooking for oneself is a good way to save money.



Dormitories offer comfort and convenient access to campus facilities.



Private apartments can be nice, but are normally pricey.



Sharing an off-campus home with friends is a great way to cut costs.

Photos by image.yahoo.com

Ask Ayi:

Q: I have applied for a postgraduate course in international business and economics at a French university. How and when do I register?

— jam

A: Terms at French universities usually start in September and end in June the next year. At some universities, students can register in December.

In order to have plenty of time to go through all the procedures, it would be a good idea to start preparing a year ahead of time. If you have chosen classes taught in French, you should hone your French skills as early as possible.

Q: I am a junior English major in university. I am very interested in business management and tourism management and plan to go to the UK to study. However, it seems difficult for students who major in language studies to enroll in another field of study. What should I do? Do I need GMAT and GRE scores for my application?

— zhxl_82

A: Many English major students go to the UK to study.

If you want to study business management or tourism management, it would be a good idea to work in some part-time jobs related to those fields in China in order to get experience. Or you could take elective courses in the areas at university as preparation.

Some universities in the UK, such as Northumbria University, Middlesex University and Napier University take students who want to change fields and provide them with assistance in doing so.

Courses in the management field will require GMAT and IELTS scores. The GRE is not needed, as it is not commonly used in the UK.

(Edited by Zhang Nan)

Learning in a Land of Culture and History

By Zhang Nan

The romantic charm of Paris, world-class universities, the tastes of real baguette and fine wine, impeccable intellectual heritage, berets... There are many reasons that Chinese students for over a century have been drawn to France to continue their educations. Yet it is not an easy matter, and some prospective students are deferred by doubts about their ability to learn the French language or get along with the country's people.

“French history and culture are the most valuable resources for people to study and appreciate,” said Pierre Yang, new director of the Beijing office of EduFrance, the French government's agency for promoting the country's higher education system.

Yang also emphasized the high quality of French education, which he said had advantages over other countries' educational systems.

“Many people mistakenly believe they have to learn French well before studying in the country, but actually many courses in English are also offered. At the same time, French is also a useful weapon.”

As part of its mission to cultivate Sino-French education ties, EduFrance is arranging for French universities and schools to participate in the upcoming international education expo in Beijing this October.

“It will be an important part of the Year of French Culture,” Yang noted.

Yang is new to the job and has only been in Beijing for two weeks. He replaced Francoise Lafon, who joined *Beijing Today's* Study Abroad Salon this summer.

Before returning to his native China, Yang worked in France for five years, promoting Chinese language education and assisting French students who wanted to study in this country.

Flour Power



Pingyao wantu come stir-fried...



...or served cold, whole and rolled with dipping sauce.



Fresh filled biscuits are great for breakfast.



The cloying, local Huangjiu



The king of Pingyao cuisine - beef and potatoes



Looks weird, tastes OK - Pingyao huhu

By Sarah Bai

Growing flocks of tourists are heading the old town of Pingyao to savor its remarkably intact city wall and other structures, its legacy as an ancient financing hub and its step-back-in-time charm. With one trip, however, most visitors will add another item to the list of the town's attractions - great food.

Pingyao food falls squarely under the category of Shanxi cuisine, a branch of Chinese cooking that tends to be heavy on delicious starchy staples. When it comes to starch, Pingyao does not disappoint, but where it manages to stand out is in its beef.

The town produces a distinctive kind of cured beef, the recipe for which is a carefully guarded secret passed down through the generations. The actual meat is shipped in from regions further west, and then put through a supposedly simple curing process that renders it very similar to Western corned beef - chewy but not tough, slightly salty and full of beef flavor.

Some say the real secret to Pingyao beef's signature flavor is the local water. Word has it that a Pingyao beef master was invited to work his magic in Europe, but was unable to produce optimum flavor or texture because the water was just not right.

Pingyao beef is normally served in two forms at restaurants - in thin slices as a cold dish, or chopped into chunks and stir-fried with potatoes, peppers and tomatoes for a hearty main. The cold dish (*Pingyao niurou*) is an excellent way to savor the beef's flavor and tastes even better when dipped in a bit of the fragrant Shanxi vinegar. The hearty hot dish (*tudou chao niurou*) is best thought of as Chinese comfort food - delectable, warming and soothingly simple. In a recent, decidedly unscientific test of a few Pingyao establishments' beef and potatoes, the Yongxiangcun restaurant, located very close to the town's old government center, was found to make the best.

Another food for which the town can claim ownership is an unusual starch product called *Pingyao huhu*. The dish is made from sorghum flour-based dough and cooked as a wide, thin, semi-jellified round with a slightly mauvish hue. Diners pull off pieces and then dunk them in a spicy accompanying sauce. The huhu itself is bland, but has an intriguing texture and picks up plenty of flavor with each dunk.

Pingyao wantu, another regional starch special, has a simi-



Noodles, beef and potatoes - Pingyao cuisine has all great basic ingredients for soul-satisfying comfort food.

larly smooth consistency but is made from regular wheat flour. The flour is mixed into dough, which is then carefully rinsed to remove most of its natural gluten. What remains is poured into common, shallow teacup saucers and steamed until set.

Finished wantu are flat, glossy noodle disks served whole and rolled or sliced into strips. Either way, they come cold with a vinegary-peppery sauce or are stir-fried in a mix of tomatoes and peppers.

Those same vegetables are also used to add flavor to *youtmian*, or wheat noodles. More a Shanxi fixture than a Pingyao specialty, wheat noodles come in a few different forms. When stir-fried, they normally appear as *cuoyu*, noodles said to look like fish but closer to worms in appearance, or they are chopped and rolled into the fancifully named *maoerduo*, or cat ear, noodles. Both have a slightly oaty flavor and a pleasingly firm texture.

Wheat noodle dough also comes pressed thin and rolled into short, open tubes that are stacked together like a beehive and steamed to make *kao laolao*. The cooked tubes should be pried apart and then dunked into a tomato-based sauce.

The same Pingyao potatoes that shine when fried with beef are cooked, mashed and then reformed into rough noodle-like lengths in the local delicacy *ban lanzi*. The "noodles" are then

mixed with cilantro, green onion, sesame seeds and sometimes a splash of vinegar, almost always in proportion to make sure the flavor of the potato rings true.

Among the town's home-grown products is the potato alternative *changshanyao*. This humble, starchy tuber is cooked, sliced and served cold, used in place of potato to make *ban lanzi* or served in caramelized chunks *basi*-style. Shanyao doesn't taste like much, but it is a little piece of culinary Pingyao.

Though the land around Pingyao is far to dry to sustain thirsty rice fields, the town still has given rise to its own brand of *Huangjiu*, or yellow rice wine, which is actually native to rice-heavy Zhejiang Province. Pingyao's Changshengyuan brand *Huangjiu* is thicker than the more familiar Shaoxing variety, sweeter and more alcoholic at over 20 percent. Its cloying, almost medicinal, flavor is certainly an acquired taste - one that Dowager Empress Cixi reportedly picked up when she passed through town over a century ago.

Pingyao's food may not be so inspiring as to justify the several-hour trip from Beijing by itself, but combined with the sights and sounds of the old town, it can turn a trip to Pingyao into a veritable feast for all the senses.

Round, Sweet and at Hotels Near You

Mid-Autumn Festival means many mooncakes

By James Liu

Swissotel Beijing

Celebrate Mid-Autumn Festival with friends and loved ones with various delicious mooncakes, on sale at the Swissotel's Happy Valley Chinese Restaurant. Fillings include green tea, lotus seed paste and jade and free delivery is offered within the Third Ring Road. Order more than 100 boxes orders and get wrapping inserts bearing your company's logo in each box. **Where:** 2 Chaoyangmen Beidajie **Tel:** 6553 2288 ext. 2146

China World Hotel

Succumb to the temptations of a wide array of exquisitely packaged mooncakes with sweet fillings of red bean and lotus seed paste. **Where:** 1 Jianguomenwai Dajie **Tel:** 6505 2266 ext. 34

Grand Hyatt Beijing

September tradition is recaptured with delightful moon cakes intricately created, prepared and presented in elegantly burgundy wooden boxes that reflect Chinese tradition with a modern touch. Complemented with aromatic longjing green tea, our gift set will leave you and your loved ones reminiscing the flavors long after the tea has been served and mooncakes shared under the full-moonlight. Available at the Patisserie and hotel restaurants, priced from 218 yuan to 1,188 yuan. **Where:** Oriental Plaza, Dongcheng **Tel:** 8518 1234 ext. 6362

Presidential Plaza Beijing

This hotel is getting into the mooncake game this year and launching a line of top quality cakes made with special ingredients. Prices range from 108 yuan to 688 yuan per box. **Where:** 9 Fuchengmenwai Dajie, Xicheng **Tel:** 5858 5588 ext. 8428

Kerry Centre Hotel

The Horizon Chinese Restaurant offers a new range of mooncakes in exciting packaging and seven different flavors. Boxes of four cakes cost 88 yuan to 188 yuan, while boxes of six are priced at 108 yuan to 388 yuan. Discounts available for bulk orders. **Where:** 1 Guanghua Lu, Chaoyang **Tel:** 6561 8833 ext. 6666

Traders Hotel

Traders mooncakes are back with brand new, exciting packaging and 21 different flavors ranging from Cantonese style mooncakes wrapped in a pastry-like crust to ones wrapped with an icing crust and Japanese style mooncakes. Prices range from 118 to 588 yuan. **Where:** 1 Jianguomenwai Dajie **Tel:** 6505 2277 ext 34

Great Wall Sheraton

Choose mooncakes with five different fillings and four kinds of attractive packaging. Prices range from 98 yuan to 988 yuan for the grand luxury box, which includes four mooncakes and one gold necklace or bracelet. The East Garden will be open on Mid Autumn Festival (September 28) for moon gazing (weather permitting). Tickets are 198 yuan per adult, half price for children below 1.20 meters tall. **Where:** 10 Dongsanhuan Beilu, Chaoyang **Tel:** 6590 5566 ext. 2132



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Activities

Reebok China Marathon

There is an 8-kilometer run for serious runners and a 2-kilometer fun run for younger runners. Grab your running shoes, pull on the lycra, and get out there!

Where: Daxing Forest
When: September 19, 8 am - noon
Registration Fee: 80 yuan (Group Discounts available, children under 12 are free.)
Tel: 8561 1926

Taoist Tour

Visit Baiyunguan (White Cloud Temple) with Chinese Culture Club and learn about the deities of the Taoist religion and how Taoists perform their rites. Observe the ritual performances by the local priests. Wang Yier, Chief editor of China Taoism Journal, will be on hand to explain and answer questions.

Meet in front of Baiyunguan Temple, Xuanwu. **When:** 2 pm, Sunday
Admission: 60 yuan (50 yuan for members)
Tel: 8851 4913

Hike Heifengkou Great Wall

Start from the village, the Great Wall is just 100 meters up the mountain. There is a valley between two mountains, where the wall is broken. The hike continues up along the wall to a special tower on the top.

Pick up: meet at 8:30 am outside Big Easy (south gate of Chaoyang Park)
When: Saturday
Cost: 150 yuan per adult, 100 yuan for children under 12
Tel: 13011171326

Earthdance Beijing 2004

The worldwide synchronized "Prayer for Peace" will link over 1 million people in over 130 cities and 50 countries.

Where: Bar Blu, level four Tongli Studio, Sanlitun Beijie
When: 10 pm, Saturday
Admission: 30 yuan
Tel: 6416 7567

Performance



Lijiang Dayan Nazi Ancient Music Concert

A performance of what is described by some as "fossil music" will be staged by Nazi Ancient Music Association at Beijing Century Theatre tomorrow and Sunday. This traditional music has been kept alive for thousands of years by the Nazi people, an ethnic group from Lijiang, a remote town in Yunnan Province.

Where: 21 Century Theatre, 40 Liangmaqiao Lu, Chaoyang
When: Saturday and Sunday, 7:30 pm
Admission: 80 - 880 yuan
Tel: 8806 7555



Crosstalk and Drama

Bright Spring Melodies is an opportunity to see xiangsheng (crosstalk) legend Jiang Kun. This six-act, seven-movement play, created in the late 1990s, combines the art of crosstalk with styles of drama and film, augmented with slide shows and special acoustic effects.

Where: Poly Theatre, 14 Dongzhimen Nandajie
When: Sunday, 7:30 pm
Admission: 80 - 580 yuan
Tel: 6501 1854

Acrobatics

The China National Acrobatics Troupe is to stage an acrobatic show. Founded in 1950, the troupe has won numerous awards in many competitions worldwide. The program includes much more than balancing bowls on the head, rolling cups, and jumping through rings.

Where: Beijing University Concert Hall, at Beijing University, Haidian
When: tonight and tomorrow, 7 pm
Admission: 10 - 60 yuan
Tel: 6275 9637



WINE TASTING AT CHA CHA WINE

Every Saturday and Sunday, wine tasting at Cha Cha Wine! Free beer, white wine and champagne.

Where: Cha Cha Wine, Jia 6 Gongti Donglu, Chaoyang
When: 3 pm - 6 pm
Admission: free
Tel: 8595 1993

Exhibitions



Oil Painting Exhibition of Cao Li and Zhang Xiaoxi

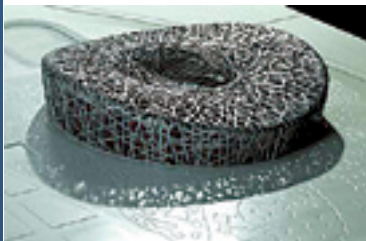
Cao Li's paintings are cerebral; complex, with deep inner relationships. Zhang Xiaoxi paints tender and exquisite still lives from her heart.

Where: Creation Art Gallery, north end of Ritan Donglu
When: September 18 - 26, 10 am - 7 pm, reception at September 18, 3 pm
Admission: free
Tel: 8561 7570

Master Works of Engraving

This exhibition features woodcuts by Gao Rongsheng, Song Yuanwen and Wang Huaxiang, etchings by Wang Wenxin and Lin Tong, lithography by Wu Biduan, and silkscreen prints by Guang Jun.

Where: Qin Gallery, 1-1E Huawei Li, Enjoy Paradise, Chaoyang
When: daily 9:30 am - 7 pm, September 23 - 30
Admission: free
Tel: 8779 0458



The First Architecture Biennial Beijing 2004

The theme of the biennial is "unlimited," symbolizing the natural power that drives people to probe into the unfamiliar. The construction and management of space has provided people with private rooms to ponder and enliven. The biennial will present design works of architects from around the world to display the latest architectural trends and design ideas.

Where: UHN international Village, Dongsanhuan Beilu
When: September 20 - October 6
Admission: free
Tel: 8808 3260



Classic Products by Chinese Ceramic Artists

This exhibition features more than 400 works by 62 artists, all with more than 20 years of experience in ceramic design.

Where: level 4, Beijing Gongyi Meishu Dalou, 200 Wangfujing Dajie
When: daily 9 am - 9 pm, till September 27
Admission: free
Tel: 13901389002



Movies



El Alamein - La linea del Fuoco

Directed by Enzo Monteleone, starring Paolo Briguglia and Pierfrancesco Favino. El Alamein, Egypt, October 1942. The British 8th Army had forced the Axis armies into a humiliating retreat. The Italians, allies of the Germans, were also there. The film describes the day-to-day troubles of front-line soldiers, as their thoughts and emotions.

Where: Italian Embassy, 2 Dongerjie, Sanlitun
When: 7 pm, Thursday
Admission: free
Tel: 6532 2187

Directed by Alfonso Cuaron, starring Daniel Radcliffe, Richard Griffiths, Pam Ferris and Fiona Shaw. It is Harry's third year at Hogwarts, but a shadow hangs over Hogwarts. A dangerous mass murderer, Sirius Black, has escaped the Azkaban Fortress - the Wizard's Prison. While learning to cope with the Dementors sent to protect Hogwarts, Harry learns the disturbing story of Sirius Black and yet more of his own history.

Where: UME International Cineplex, (Huaxing Guoji Yingcheng), 44 Shuangyushu Kexueyuan, Haidian
When: opens September 20
Tel: 6261 2851



Zhou Yu's Train (Zhou Yu de Huoche)

Directed by Sun Zhou, starring Gong Li, Tony Leung Kefai and Sun Honglei. After Chen Qing sees Zhou Yu on the dance floor, he hands her a poem and then disappears. Zhou Yu finds his home and the two become lovers. But on the train that Zhou Yu takes to see the poet, she meets a veterinarian. This man is less adoring than the romantic poet, but Zhou Yu is attracted to the stability he can provide.

Where: Cherry Lane Movie Theater, 29 Liangmaqiao Lu, Chaoyang
When: 8 pm tonight and Saturday
Admission: 50 yuan
Tel: 13501251303

Music

Wang Feng Solo in Beijing

Wang Feng will perform a solo concert tonight, looking back on his ten years playing rock and roll. This show will certainly be a night to remember.

Where: Beijing Exhibition Hall Theatre, Xizhimenwai Dajie, Xicheng
When: tonight 7:30 pm
Admission: 100 - 320 yuan
Tel: 6835 4455



Jams

Color

Pop girl-band Color (Yanse) gets a regular showing at What? bar.

Where: What? bar, 72 Beichang Jie, Xicheng
When: Saturday, 9 pm
Admission: 20 yuan (includes a draft beer)
Tel: 13910209249

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Language Exchange

Devon, male 26, works as an English tour guide and video editor, is looking for language exchange. Mobile: 13801257654

A young guy is looking for a girl who is studying English or French at university, (doesn't has to be her major), as a partner to practice the languages. Contact: bobwang19782003@yahoo.com.cn

Emely, a 19 year old girl from Sweden, with ESOL grade A, is looking for someone who can teach her Chinese. In exchange she will help you with your English, Swedish or German. Someone living in or in the vicinity of Wangjing preferred. Contact: 13552470921

A graduate from Beijing Second Foreign Language University, majored in Marketing and English, would like to make friends with people who are native speakers of English. If you are a person with passion for life in Beijing, contact: kellydavid_5@hotmail.com

Professional help

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TV and Radio Highlights

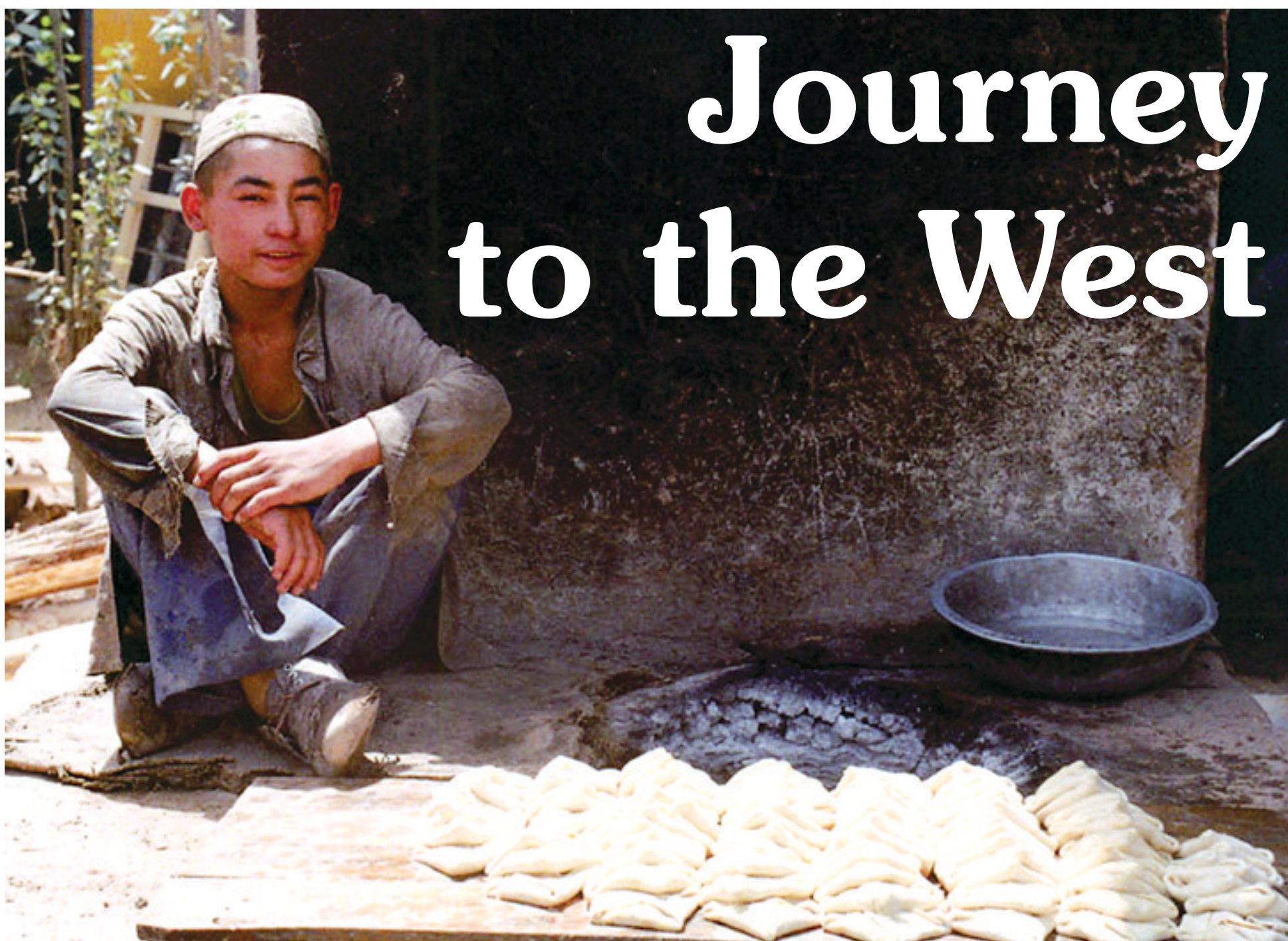
HBO	
17 Friday	
Half Past Dead	9 pm
18 Saturday	
Anger Managemet	9 pm
19 Sunday	
Sense and Sensibility	11:10 pm
20 Monday	
Virtuosity	10:30 pm
21 Tuesday	
Rudy	6:20 pm
22 Wednesday	
Point of Origin	10 pm
23 Thursday	
I am Sam	11:20 pm
CCTV-9	
Monday - Friday	
Around China	6:30 am
Cultural Express	8:30 am
Nature and Science /	
Chinese Civilization	11:30 am
Cultural Express	2:30 pm
Nature and Science /	
Chinese Civilization	5:30 pm
Dialogue	7:30 pm
News Updates /	
Asia Today	8 pm
Sports Scene	11:15 pm
Saturday	
Travelogue	9:30 am
Center Stage	11:30 am
Sunday	
Sports Weekend	10 am
Documentary	10:30 am
This Week	12:30 am
China Radio International 91.5 FM	
Monday - Friday	
Easy FM Afternoon	2-7 pm
Fun in Beijing	5-5:30 pm
Joy FM	9:05-11 pm
Saturday	
Music Memories	8:05-11 am
Euro Hit 40	12:05-1 pm
Musique Sans Frontières	6:05-8 pm
Joy FM	9:05-11 pm
Sunday	
Music Memories	8:05-11 am
Jazz Beat	6:05-8 pm
Joy FM	9:05-11 pm

By Zhang Jianzhong

Destination and departure point, exotic and impossibly remote, the name Kashgar is irresistible to backpackers and arm-chair travelers the world over. Although the modern world has been encroaching in many ways for many years now, there are still traces enough of an ancient silk road oasis to win over all but the most jaded of tourists.

The population remains predominantly Uygur in this western-most part of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, but there are also large numbers of Tajiks, Kyrgyz, Uzbeks and Han Chinese.

Traders and explorers have been passing through Kashgar for over 2,000 years. With the vast Taklamakan Desert to the east and the snow capped Pamir and Karakorum mountains to the west, it is an ideal spot to rest your camel train and stock up on sultanas and dried apricots. Which ever direction you are heading, if you are in Kashgar, you still have a very long way to go.



Selling mutton dumplings on a street stall.

Photos by Ian Provan



Yoghurt sellers



Going home from the Sunday Market



Sunday Market

By Ian Provan

Clearly, those silk road traders did not spend all their time resting up for the onward journey – trade, barter, wheeling and dealing seem to be part of the fabric of life in Kashgar. The bazaar in the old town and the Sunday Market are the two best places to witness commerce Kashgar style, and both are sources of endless entertainment.

If you are looking to stock up on food supplies for the next leg of the journey, buy a new copper teapot, a fur lined hat with padded ear flaps or a dagger with a stylish inlaid handle, the bazaar is the best place to shop. If you are after a new camel, horse, donkey or a few fat-tailed sheep, the Sunday Market is probably your best bet.

The bazaar covers a large area around the Id Kah Mosque and the old town. To the west of the mosque, the gold and copper bazaar sells, not surprisingly, gold

and copper wares, the gold mainly in the form of heavy jewelry.

In the streets around the south side of the mosque are several shops selling traditional Uygur musical instruments, the most portable of which are probably the *surnai*, a kind of reed horn, and the *dab*, or tambourine. There are also a few carpet sellers, but there is a better selection available at the Sunday Market.

The main part of the bazaar is to the east of the mosque, spreading into the old town. There are rows and rows of cap sellers, selling the traditional triangular embroidered caps as well as the more rakish brimmed caps. Then there is an astonishing variety of fur hats, guaranteed to keep your head warm through the bitterest of winters (and Kashgar sees some pretty bitter winters). Further on are leather shoes and boots – if you are in town for a few days, this is the place to have a stylish pair of leather riding boots made



Sunday Market

to order for a very reasonable price, providing your bargaining skills are up to the task.

And of course, food, glorious food! Mountains of dried apricots and apricot kernels, graded according to size and quality, sultanas graded possibly according to degree of greenness, possibly according

to degree of deliciousness, or possibly according to an entirely arbitrary whim of the seller ... and various other ideal trekking supply supplements.

Even if you are not in the market for any of the above goods, the bazaar is a fascinating place to explore and to pick up a few bargaining tips from the locals.

The other shopping highlight in Kashgar is the famous Sunday Market. People come from all over the surrounding countryside for this weekly event of festival proportions. It occupies a large open area on the east side of the Tuman River, east of the old town. This is where you can watch elderly bearded men test driving donkeys, younger men test driving horses, serious looking men with knives in their belts checking the teeth of camels or sheep, people haggling over a bewildering variety of farming equipment, feed for livestock, eggs, chickens, grain, plants, building material and a considerable quantity of goods of an entirely unidentifiable nature.

Sightseeing

In between getting carried away in the bazaar and overwhelmed at the Sunday Market, there are several other sights around town that should not be left off the itinerary.

The old town is a good place for just wandering around. There is some beautiful old architecture to be stumbled upon, and there are still a few (very few) remnants left of the 500-year-old city wall.

The Id Kah Mosque, one of the largest in China, dates back to the 15th century, although it has been extensively renovated since then. Non-Muslims are permitted to enter, but you should dress appropriately – long trousers and sleeves, women should cover their hair with a scarf.

The ruins of the ancient city of Ha Noi lie 30 or so kilometers out of town. This Tang Dynasty town fell into ruin around the 12th century, and there is very little of it left to see today, other than some oddly shaped earthen mounds, but it makes a pleasant outing from Kashgar, especially if you make the trip by donkey cart, rather than taxi.

The journey onward

Although these days it is a destination in itself, throughout its long history, Kashgar has always been a place to stop, on the way to somewhere else, and there are several extremely alluring options for travelers when the time comes to leave.

Continuing on and out of China, the Karakorum Highway heads southwest, up into the Pamirs to Tashkurgan and then over the Karakorums into Pakistan and the Hunza Valley. This is a spectacularly beautiful route, passing by the 7,719

meter Kongur Shan, Xinjiang's highest mountain, then the 7,546 meter Muztaghata. Buses usually stop overnight at Tashkurgan before continuing on over the Khunjerab Pass (4,730 meters) through alpine meadows where glaciers come down almost to the road. This route is closed through winter.

South from Kashgar, the southern branch of the silk road skirts the southern edge of the Taklamakan Desert, via Yarkand, Yecheng, Hotan and Charkilik, from where you can either rejoin the northern silk road at Korla and continue on to Urumqi or Turpan, or if you are really adventurous, take a series of local buses into Qinghai and then Gansu, winding up at Dunhuang. This option would require a fairly flexible itinerary, as transport is by no means regular or reliable.

The other option, apart from the north silk road to Urumqi, is to take the southern silk road and branch off at Yecheng for Ali, or Shiquanhe, in western Tibet. This 1,100 kilometer journey passes through some particularly remote regions, crosses some particularly high mountain passes (over 5,400 meters) and is subject to some particularly extreme weather. Take plenty of dried apricots with you.

Getting there

One of those encroachments of the modern world that have made Kashgar considerably more accessible is the railway from Urumqi, which opened in 1999. Hard sleeper from Beijing to Urumqi takes 44 hours and costs 630 yuan, and from Urumqi to Kashgar, 23 hours and 275 yuan.

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